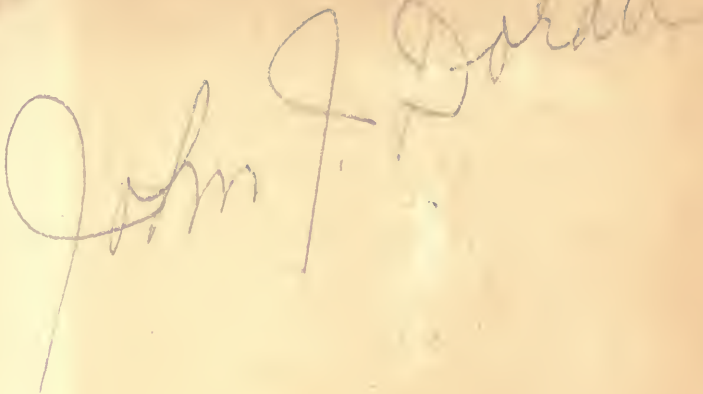
A MILL TOWN PASTOR

JOSEPH CONROY, S.J.



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THE STORY OF A WITTY AND VALIANT PRIEST

BY
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TO THE DIOCESAN PRIESTS
WHOM I HAVE MET UPON THE MISSIONS
IN ADMIRATION OF THEIR ZEAL AND ABILITY
AND IN GRATEFUL RECOGNITION
OF MANY KINDNESSES
THIS SKETCH OF ONE OF THEM
IS RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED
BY THE AUTHOR

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A MILLTOWN PASTOR

CHAPTER I

WHITE AND BLACK

"YESSUH, the platform's right here, suh."

I took my two bags from the porter, stepped off the train and plunged down into five feet of snow.

When I emerged and got something like my bearings, all I could see through a clear spot on my glasses was that porter. His eyes had rolled into two astonished little snowballs.

"Is this the platform I'm on, porter?" I asked, through a mouthful of snow. The question was intended to be severe.

"No suh, I don't guess it is, suh," said he.

"I should say it isn't," I retorted, with what was meant for ironic repartee. The porter never answered the crushing remark. I knew he was going to laugh out loud as soon as he got inside.

The train pulled out and I was left stand-

ing almost neck deep in a world of snow and freighted with two bags that had to be landed somewhere.

Cautiously I settled the two bags at my feet, rubbed more snow off my glasses and looked about. Great hills of whirling snow to my right, off across where I knew the river was. To my left, more hills of snow, with bulges of snow scattered over them and gathered at their base. This was the town. In the center, just before me, and rising stark against the whiteness, the huge stacks of the mills were silhouetted, like black fingers reaching up to grasp at the sky. Nothing else in sight.

"Are you the Father that's going to give the mission?" I heard a young voice say.

"Hello!" I answered, looking about. Over near a round bulge that formerly was the station I saw two faces peering over a snow trench. They were two boys.

"Yes," I said. "If I can ever get far enough out of this to start something. But how am I going to get out of here?"

"You'll have to get over where we are, Father. The ground's smooth. Just walk it and we have a path the rest of the way up."

It was only some twenty feet to go. I waded the distance and sure enough saw the

path, hitherto invisible, and back on the path two toy sleds waiting for my bags. I handed up the bags, scrambled up on the platform, shook hands with the boys, placed the bags on the sleds, and we began our climb; for we had to climb every foot of the way. John went first with bag and sled number one. Vincent second with bag and sled number two, and I brought up the rear, puffing and vapory, like the steam calliope in the circus parade. We wound around and up, and up and around, and finally straight up. Snow on all sides of us, but for John and Vincent it was the great adventure. They kept talking, shouting, bossing each other all the way, without a sign of fatigue, until at last a little run, a shove extraordinary, and—

"Welcome, Father, to the top of Mount Ararat. You have Noah beaten. He came down here out of the rain, but you climbed up through the snow. Isn't it grand weather for the mission? Now beat it you, John and Vincent, and change your clothes or you'll get your death of cold. Don't give them anything, Father. They're working for the mission. Well, go along with you now. Come right in, Father, and we'll shovel the snow off you. Such a lovely day!"

I shook hands with Father Coffey, pastor of St. Agnes' Church in Mingo Junction, and began my first mission there that night.

The memory of that mission will be with me always. Not that there was anything the least pretentious about the externals of the place. It was not a spacious structure of romantic glooms and alluring vistas. It was merely a little wooden, smoke-battered church, with a rectory no whit more luxurious, and a school building and a Sisters' house copied from no Venetian palace.

All four buildings were on the slope of a steep hill with the church at the top. There was more of the hill above the church, but my surmise is that the original builders got too tired to carry the lumber any further up the hill and stopped while they had strength enough left to go on with the construction. They never imagined perhaps that the day would come when others would build even farther up the hill to its very top and then out over the flat land that breaks there.

It was not the costly architecture that impressed me. It was the people. The first notable thing was the way they attended that mission through weather that would bother the monks of St. Bernard. The snow continued

for days and it was humorously edifying to see half the congregation stumble up to the church and the other half slide down to it. As early as five o'clock in the morning they could be seen in the half light making their laborious way toward the church and three times a day thereafter various groups made the journey forth and back. Going home, of course, the climbers turned into sliders and vice versa. And it was not merely the young people who did it. Every one in the parish made the mission and all were fervent and jolly over it at the same time, with the buoyancy of genuine hill-climbers.

"This congregation is not on the level," Father Coffey said.

The next thing one could not fail to observe was the fact that a large part of the people was made up of Slovaks, Hungarians, Austrians, Italians, Poles—in the country comparatively only a short time; while the others were Americans, principally descendants of Irish parentage, perhaps of the third generation. But while there was a difference, there was no division. It was like a family gathering. Everyone appreciated everyone else. Racial distinctions were not even thought about. Each person felt completely and com-

fortably at home. An atmosphere of good feeling, of cheerful give and take, was abroad. And it did not require subtle observation to note that the whole congregation strongly but quietly gravitated toward Father Coffey and moved with him and about him. It was the first insight I got of his extraordinary power over a wide variety of characters.

Toward the close of the week the snow turned into rain, even a more disheartening obstacle to a mission than snow. But the people came as steadily as the rain.

"Noah is at it again," said Father Coffey. "He's never happy unless there's water on Mount Ararat. I thought he'd send me at least one dove out of two missionaries. But it's two ravens he sent me."

In a spiritual sense, at any rate, it is the problem of the dove and the raven that fronts the priest at every turn, and nowhere more insistently than in a mill town where heavy and incessant toil tends to bring on a physical fatigue that blots out the soul's heaven with a screen of smoke; a dull monotony that saps away the upleaping of the spirit in the shriveling furnace of routine.

To preserve the earthly lives of his children white as the new-fallen snow, to keep heaven

open to their gaze and the great black fingers of sin from clutching their souls and dragging them down into darkness, was the problem that faced Father Coffey and that Father Coffey faced—a problem sharply typified that night by the hills that lay white around me and the black mill-stacks reaching threateningly into the sky above.

CHAPTER II

AT HOME

AT the time of the "Mount Ararat" incident in 1913, Father Coffey was forty-one years of age. He was born in Brooklyn on the thirtieth of July, 1872. He grew up as a little fellow in that city and received his early education in the schools there. The seeds of a character that ripened so beautifully with the years, were started into vigorous growth during those early days at home.

Young Dan grew up in the parish of St. Francis Xavier in Brooklyn and Monsignor Hickey, the pastor, was his lifelong friend. "I knew him as a boy of good, solid Catholic parents," said Monsignor Hickey. "Solid" is by no means a synonym for stolid when applied to Catholicity. There was very little stolidity about the Coffey family. Plenty of room for Dan's individuality of character to grow, for his native wit to blossom, and his sunny temper to light up everything around

him. It was not one of those mortuary households where ten thousand and ten commandments, mostly "don'ts," like a swarm of hornets, are daily unloosed around the bewildered head of childhood, and where forcible feeding followed by the broomstick drill administered with grim Puritanic ferocity, are the staple family devotions.

On the contrary, Dannie had the good fortune to be trained in a home where the great principle was understood that each soul is a special creation of God, with its own alloted characteristics, its unique temperament, its assigned gifts, its definite limitations. "As a tree planted by the running waters, that will yield its fruit in its own season"—this was the underlying idea followed out in the upbringing of young Daniel and this is the reason why his parents are aptly described as "solidly Catholic."

He wasn't allowed to grow wild, of course. Dan got his "trimmings" like any other boy. But he got them when he needed them. He wasn't torn up by the roots; suffered from no freak graftings, was stripped of none of the strong, reaching boughs of individuality. No attempts were made to get the fruit before the blossom, but there was always patient wait-

ing, attentive watching, nevertheless, that the fruit should appear "in its own time."

"He was the same as a boy that he was as a priest," said Monsignor Hickey, "a genial, energetic boy, liked by his teachers, liked by his companions and withal devout and regular at the Sacraments."

Words like these tell in a nutshell all that we should like to hear about a boy, and every word points directly at his home as the source of that combination of vivacity and seriousness of character which were woven together in his life with so perfect a balance of each against the other. The earliest incidents of his boyhood forecast this wit and wisdom of his with great accuracy.

He had a statue of St. John for his room and he got the idea into his little head that this St. John ought to go about doing good. So he took the statue into his arms—he wasn't much bigger than the statue—and started down the street with it to the church, some blocks distant. Wisely, nobody in the house prevented him, but let him work out the idea for himself. He carried St. John to church, had it blessed and returned home with it. He repeated this performance again and again at intervals of a few days, until the spectacle of a very small

boy with a very large statue moving down the street began to be a nine days' wonder, especially to the good, if curious, ladies who took a little time from their housework to keep *en rapport* with happenings in the street.

"Who is that child that keeps carrying the statue up and down past the house?" asked Number One.

"I can't imagine who he is," said Number Two. "I watched him several days and he always carries it into the church."

"Here he is now. Let's ask him what he is doing," said Number Three.

Dannie came along, solemn as a butler, perfectly alive to the fact that he was watched, knowing that he was to be questioned, but with that straight ahead look and that apparent oblivion of observation which all who knew him in later life remember with much amusement.

"Where are you going with the statue, little boy?" asked Number One, as Dan came alongside.

Dan became conscious of their presence.

"I am going to the church, lady," said he.

"Isn't that statue heavy?" ventured Number Two.

"It isn't as heavy as I am, ma'am," said Dannie, serenely.

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"What is it the statue of?" she asked, rather flustered by Dannie's unexpected answer.

"It is the statue of St. John," replied Dannie.

"St. John!" said Number Three. "Isn't that cute!"

"Cute!" said Dan, putting down the statue. "He was the best friend of our Lord and he was thrown into a big barrel of boiling oil."

"Mercy!" exclaimed all Three.

Dan had them where he wanted them and he proceeded to give a picture of St. John in the barrel of boiling oil with the grotesque enlargements of which only a small boy with an imagination is capable, until he had the three ladies petrified with fright. Then he put his arms around St. John and marched off with him to the church.

"Now they'll know St. John was somebody," said Dan when he told his mother all about it.

A good non-Catholic lady stopped him another day with the statue and kindly tried to show him just what idol worship meant. Really it was too bad that a little fellow should be brought up to adore images in that way. Dan won the battle with his usual tactics. He waited until he could get the point of his wit through an unwatched spot in the enemy's

armor and then, putting down the statue, he gave the history of St. John again, splashing the boiling oil around with the verisimilitude of a necromancer.

"Her eyes opened wide," he told his mother.

Master Coffey had learned early in life the lesson of the *beatus vir,* the "happy man," of the Scripture, that genuine fun and genuine piety are almost synonymous terms. He never forgot it.

As a sidelight of the above incident we might gather that Master Dan had a way with him of being close to his mother. So it was. Mother and son were an understanding pair who worked together perfectly, mother giving Dan plenty of room to work and Dan telling his mother just how everything went and taking the necessary directions with an intelligent docility.

"Daniel dearly loved his mother," writes his sister Josephine, "and as well as circumstances would allow, she was his companion until her death. He shared with her everything he had. Even as a little fellow, when he bought candy he saved half of it for her. Any gift that could be divided, she received half of it. And the half that was left he shared so freely all around that often he didn't have anything at all for

himself. He made no fuss about giving. He liked to see people have things."

This liking to see people "have things" was with him until the end.

One thing he did not like to give away was flowers. He had a great love for flowers, planting them himself and watching them as children. "When but a child," his sister writes, "anything he would plant would grow so splendidly. He seemed to understand them and to know just what they needed. He used to say the flowers loved the dead."

Off his little dining room in Mingo, many years later, he had built a tiny room, walled with glass for his flowers. He glorified it with the name "Conservatory." And when the huge smoke drifts swept up the hill from the mill stacks below, one could see against the dun background pouring around the windows, like a rainbow in a storm, the gleam of Father Coffey's flowers.

It is not to be supposed from what we have said that Dannie was a "mama's boy"; meaning, in the popular estimation, a boy who on the first appearance of trouble clings passionately to mother's skirts and burying a flower-like face deep therein, bursts into convulsive tears. No, Dan was an aggressive youngster,

and aggressive people haven't time for tears. They are too busy doing things and among those things is the inevitable boys' fight. Dan had his share of the neighborhood fights, returning at times therefrom with a face that bore the marks of battle. Doubtless the other fellow carried its mate. The element of fun, though, was not absent from his fighting.

Once Dan was walking along the street and on turning a corner he came upon a drunken man, followed at a little distance by a bunch of boys. Whether it is a mysterious cruelty that lurks in boys that makes them torment a drunken man, or whether it is their innate disgust at a giant deliberately reducing himself to a helpless hulk, at any rate they regard intoxication as fair game for them. This gang of boys was no exception to the rule. They were still at some little distance behind the man, but gradually were drawing closer for a war dance around him as they sensed his complete inability to defend himself.

Dan took in the situation in a flash. He never thought it square to attack anyone who was down. He knew the crowd, but he went against it. He got in between them and the drunken man.

"You fellows let him alone," he said.

"Aw, what's it to you?" they retorted. "We had him before you came around."

"Well, you ain't going to have him any longer," said Dan.

"Is that so? Who says we ain't? Listen to the copper talking!" was the derisive repartee of the gang.

Just then the man, realizing in a blurred way that someone was trying to help him, tried to straighten up, but after a series of pyrotechnic zigzags, dropped in a lump to the sidewalk. Dan stepped over to him, took a quick look at him, turned to the crowd of boys and said:

"You aren't going to make fun of your own father, Billy Jackson, are you?" Billy was the biggest boy in the crowd and about Dan's size.

"He is not my father," shouted Billy indignantly, coming forward.

"You just look and see," said Dan.

In a sudden panic, Billy did look closely at the man.

"You're a liar!" he screamed. "It is not my father."

"I didn't say he was," said Dan jauntily.

"I'll hit you a punch in the eye," yelled Billy.

Dan didn't wait. He hit Billy a punch in

the eye and another punch in the other eye. Billy was staggered. The crowd was agape. The unexpected turn of events was too much for their brains.

"Come on, now, and help him up," said Dan, just as though nothing had happened. Billy's head was evidently cleared by the punches he got, for he helped Dan set the man on his feet and take him to his home near by.

One very cold, snowy night in midwinter Dan came into the house, carefully leading an old woman who had lost her way in the storm. Dan had been trudging home as fast as he could out of the freezing weather, when he observed a bewildered figure standing perfectly still and gazing about. He stopped, inquired if he could be of help and found that he could be, indeed. The old lady was completely out of her way and was suffering much with the cold. The alert Dan took immediate charge of her, guided her to his own home, introduced her to them all and then said:

"Mother, may we have a cup of hot tea?"

Mother was delighted. She made the tea and soon the old lady was thoroughly warmed and comfortable. Dan then brought her to her home, a long distance away.

We are told that such things were not at all

unusual for Dan to do. "He loved the old and the poor," said his sister Josephine, "and was happy when helping to make them happy." Whenever he could not see his way to assist them, he depended on the folks at home and it says much for the understanding hospitality of his home that they never failed to come to his rescue. Even while away at college, writing to his mother he said: "Mother, do not let a poor person pass by your door. Give him my share." The idea never left him and later in life "my share" grew to be everything he had.

Not many mothers would trust the dressing of their hair to their young sons. Not many boys, I think, would dare to attempt the mazy task. Mrs. Margaret Duffy, sister of Father Coffey, and still living in Brooklyn, tells us that she remembers well how when mother was unwell or very tired and the girls were busy, Master Daniel would drop his ball and bat, take up comb and brush and dress her hair with the delicate skill and sure touch of an artist. Looking at Daniel from this particular angle, I regard him with admiring awe.

CHAPTER III

THE LADDERS OF SCHOOL

ALL this time Dan was climbing rung after rung of the school ladders. In my search of his record through this period I have found no gold medals, no ribbons of excellence, none of those "high marks" which proclaim the youthful phenomenon of the lofty brow. Dan "got through" safely, however, and his teachers never forgot him.

"Did Dan Coffey graduate?" asked one of his teachers who had left the school and was inquiring after her old class that had moved up from her.

"Yes," was the answer, "he passed in every branch."

"I knew he would," said his former teacher. "They never could keep that boy down."

The truth seemed to be that when Dan got his lessons, he mastered them with brilliancy. After winning the teacher's heart with some wonderful work, he would hazard a mental holiday and would appear in class with a brain

utterly empty of legitimate answers to questions on the class matter, but full up of original ideas for avoiding discovery and fresh methods of throwing the pursuers off the trail.

"I was like Eliza crossing the ice with the bloodhounds after me," he once said, remembering with delight those contests.

Dan had shrewd teachers who were not to be easily fooled by the world-old strategy of boys in school. He understood, accordingly, that he had to evolve something new every time to have the least chance of escape. He did it.

"I used to wait for Dan Coffey at every one of the corners a boy could turn to get away from his teachers," said one who remembered him accurately, "when all of a sudden I would find him right behind me with a look of innocence on his face and a touch of wonder as though he didn't know what I was worrying about. Sympathy, too, was in his eyes, as though he would wish to help me out of any trouble I was in, no matter what it might be. No other boys in the room would think of the escapes he planned, and if they did, they wouldn't dare to try them."

Of course Dan didn't escape all the time. His average of successes, however, made the game worth the risks. It had been easier for

him to get the lessons by straight study, but the spirit of adventure led him into these contests of wits and no doubt he was here learning things that were not to be found in books. After one of these escapades he would settle down again and sparkle with intelligence until his teachers would be on the point of regarding him as a boy wonder, when another dash across the thin ice would turn incipient admiration into gasps of bewilderment.

"Dan was never loud, nor coarse, nor destructive," continues his friend and teacher. "He wasn't what boys nowadays call 'rough house.' He never upset the class and he was the pink of politeness. No matter how tight a corner he was in, his answers to all questions were perfectly mannerly. He did everything gracefully, including mistakes. And his ruses were so new always, so unexpected and so —funny is the only word I can think of to describe them—so funny, that even the teacher had to see that they left a trail of sunshine after them and over the whole class."

They threw a slight shadow across Dan's averages, nevertheless; but it was the sunniest shadow that ever flitted across a record book. I may cause a deep frown to mold itself upon the iron brow of the modern statistical educa-

tor and I may bring an ominous stone finger to train upon me as a traitor to the cause, but I am free to say that I am glad that Dannie, like Eliza, crossed the ice.

The grades finished, Dan hesitated as to his next step, whether to continue at school or to go into the world of business.

New York was then beginning her swing into full financial power and opportunities were many, even for youngsters, to move with the tide to fortune. Dan started to work but kept in the back of his head the alternative of school.

About this time he came into close contact with Father, now Monsignor, Hickey, his pastor, and the lifelong friendship then formed proved a turning point in Dan's career. Father Hickey was in the beginnings of the splendid buildings he has since erected for his parish and was weaving his way through the continuous and often tantalizing difficulties that rose between him and the fulfillment of his dream.

Difficulties were always a challenge to Dan, especially the difficulties of a friend. Young as he was he offered himself to aid Father Hickey in whatever way was possible for a lad.

"No one," said Monsignor Hickey, "was deeper in the work than Daniel Coffey; none was more jubilant over our successes, or more tenacious in hanging on whenever a setback came. He made the parish cause his own as far as he could, and he had a way with him that could cut through trouble when older heads had failed. And whether the prospects were dark or bright, Dan drew fun out of the situation. He added a touch of sunshine to everything."

One of the activities for the promotion of funds was the then inevitable bazaar. Among the things entrusted to Dan was the decoration of the hall where the bazaar was to be held. Dan had a sure taste for decoration. As one of his friends said in later years: "Give Father Coffey a yard of ribbon and a paper flower and he'll make a chicken coop look interesting."

Dan settled down to the work of decorating. He enlisted a little army of helpers and another of contributors. Bunting, flags, flowers, Japanese lanterns, pennants, plants, appeared in plenty. Odd, curious and simply unusable gifts likewise came in from generous but unenlightened souls. Dan received the bric-a-brac with the serious and gracious elegance he

knew how to employ, sincerely thanking the donors, but using a necessary ingenuity to hide most of it in the limbo of dark corners.

Just when the work was about finished and Dan was standing back to give the masterpiece one of his pre-Raphaelite looks of approving contemplation, two ladies stepped up to him, each carrying a bird cage with a canary in it.

"Mr. Coffey," said one of them, "we simply couldn't resist loaning you our lovely canaries. The hall is so beautiful that it needs only this added touch to make it seem like home. We know you will like them and you will take the best care of them won't you?"

Dan groaned in spirit. Canary birds a decoration at a bazaar! Where the boys would poke sticks in at them to see them bite and the girls feed them with indigestible bazaar foods! But the two were such dear old ladies! Gallantry won the day.

"Canaries!" exclaimed he. "What an original idea! We'll just embower them in a secluded spot and have the people enjoy some invisible singing."

Dan hung the cages aloft near the roof in a nest of tissue paper and flags and hoped the boys wouldn't see them. The opening night passed famously. Not the least trouble with

the birds. They were so quiet that the boys never suspected them. But somebody else did. Next morning Dan came rushing into Father Hickey's study.

"My God, Father, we're ruined!" he said.

"What is the matter?" asked Father Hickey, alarmed.

"Matter!" said Dan. "Here's all that's left of those canary birds." And he held out a weak scramble of yellow feathers.

"That tomcat climbed up on the rafters and had a midnight lunch off them," he said. "How will I ever tell those ladies?"

What to do? The strategy board met and after the meeting Dan went down town and purchased two other canaries as like the lately deceased as possible. He brought them in the cages to the home of the two ladies.

"Ladies," he said, "we are most grateful to you for allowing us to have your beautiful birds for the opening evening. In spite of their great attractiveness we fear that the noise and excitement may get on their nerves and injure them. That would be too bad for such lovely creatures and we should never forgive ourselves if anything happened to them."

The ladies understood very graciously and Dan withdrew.

The following day Dan dashed into Father Hickey's study again, this time jubilantly.

"What do you think, Father Hickey? A miracle has been performed in the parish!" Father Hickey was mystified.

"Why," continued Dan, "the Misses Young were in at the hall just now in an ecstasy. I thought they were coming to sue for damages, but they came to tell me the wonderful result of the one night stand their birds had at the bazaar. 'Those birds,' they said, 'began to sing for us the moment you left them at the house and they have been singing ever since.'

" 'Wasn't that nice of them!' " I said.

" 'Nice, Mr. Coffey!' they said; 'that isn't the word at all for it. It's miraculous, that's what it is. Those canaries never sang a note in their lives before!' "

The close and sympathetic companionship of young Dan with Father Hickey had its effect. Dan saw with growing clearness the work of the priesthood with its wide opportunities for helping others and this attraction appealed to him with steadily growing force. "Dan was as deeply interested in the parish as I was," writes Monsignor Hickey, "and I was not surprised to see him finally choose the

calling of the priesthood as his vocation in life."

Dan took up the study of Latin and his pastor was his first teacher. He made good progress in that and kindred studies and in the fall of 1890 he entered St. Charles' College, Ellicott City, Maryland.

CHAPTER IV

COLLEGE DAYS

THE college boy, as he appears in the pages of the accepted biography or novel, is generally a messy creature. He is either raw unto bleeding or he is overdone to a cinder. A composite of the school characters one remembers from the books would make an *olla podrida* fit only for a witch's cauldron: A lovelorn, irresponsible gander of an Arthur Pendennis; a romantic desperado of a Steerforth; the icy flawlessness of a "double first" Gladstone; the bulging-browed memory feats of a Macaulay; heaps of vulgar rubbish from a Stalky & Co.; swashes of egotistical cynicism from a Henry Adams; atop of this, bunches of hard muscle from incipient pugilists, ballplayers, oarsmen, foot racers, high jumpers, and all of it heavily spiced with loud yawps of vacant merriment, indicating "heads to let," and with yodles, rah-rahs, town and gown riots, Jew pawnbrokers, bills payable, parti-colored garments,

Yo! ho! ho! and a bottle of rum!

A gruel thick and slap! Sniffing it cautiously and from a distance, one concludes that any college undertaking to make that concoction taste like champagne should select for its motto:

Double, double toil and trouble!

Especially if the faculty of said college is to be along the lines these same books tell us is typical—a more or less rambling and random collection of absentminded, dry-as-dust Dominie Sampsons, at the mercy of every sprouting youth whose callow imagination runs exclusively to tricks; who succeed with them, too, every time, because the collective faculty has about as much knowledge of human nature as of the hinter side of the moon.

College days in the books are always a Roman triumph for the boys and a "Væ victis" for the faculty.

It may be so in the colleges these books profess to describe. My own rather prolonged experience, however, both as a student and as a faculty member of Catholic colleges, tells me distinctly that here it is not so. It is the students and not the faculty who are trained in

Catholic colleges. Whatever happens elsewhere, a boy in a Catholic college is sure not to get "absent treatment."

A Catholic college is a "strict" college, which means that in the intellectual field the college expects to get its lessons done; on the moral side, it insists on a life aligned with the Ten Commandments; in the matter of discipline, it calls for such united movement on the part of the students that no friction shall develop to interfere with either morals or studies.

The main aim of a Catholic college is the morals of the student. Next comes his mental training and last in importance, and entirely as a means to the two great ends, comes discipline. Every liberty is allowed the student which in the judgment of the school will not intrude upon his higher purpose there. But discipline is there to check at once any such intrusion, because the college knows well that discipline is the great outer wall of defense for the city of the soul. As soon as students break down that wall—and it is the first thing they attempt when they desire to dominate—that college had better close its gates. It rapidly becomes a foul nest for the breeding of mental imbecility and moral disease. The Catholic college will not permit it for a minute.

These paragraphs will sound platitudinous to those familiar with the workings of the Catholic school. They are put down here to indicate briefly to those who do not happen to know, what the typical atmosphere is in a school of Catholic training.

Such a school Daniel Coffey chose for his classical studies when he decided to go to St. Charles' College. It is a compliment to his judgment that he elected a school that was bent on training, rather than entertaining, its pupils. And it is a compliment to the school that it appreciated Dan's quality, gave him its full training and its degree, and as later years abundantly proved, produced a work worthy of its best efforts.

Dan Coffey brought to St. Charles' no mean equipment at that. A quick, original yet docile mind, a brilliant wit, a steady moral character. What he needed was to have these deepened, broadened, fused into a single energy, focused upon a single ideal.

"Upon my return to St. Charles' College," writes Father William Ryan, of the Archdiocese of Chicago, one of Dan's boyhood and lifelong friends, "in 1890, I think it was, I met Dan for the first time. As I look back through the years, I still can see plainly the

Dan of college days—an open-hearted, sincere, genial soul. His candid, unreserved, outspoken ways were so distinctive that at times he was misunderstood on account of them. He was impulsive, some would say temperamental, but always conscientious. What was apparently flippant independence was nothing more than the expression of a nature frank and free. One always knew just where he stood. Subterfuge was not in the make-up of his character at any period of his life."

Another boyhood friend, the Reverend James F. Higgins, of the Archdiocese of New York, who was, as he says, the "intimate and companion" of the Dan Coffey of thirty years ago, writes thus of his friend:

"Our paths diverged on the eve of going out into the world, and except for a rare brief space, our orbits never crossed again. Thus in his years of public life I did not know him by personal contact, but I did know him, I feel, by the strong intimation his young manhood gave of what his life was likely to be, for his character had almost hardened in its mold.

"The qualities that, I hear from all sides, glorified his work as a priest, are precisely the qualities that made him conspicuous in his young manhood.

"There never was a cleaner-hearted boy than Dan Coffey. I never observed then nor since a deeper, more matured sympathy for his fellowman in all vicissitudes. I never knew anyone to cloak so genuine a seriousness about all essentials with so constant a joy of heart and such sparkling play of whimsical wit. It is true he saw the laugh in everything if the laugh were really there. It was not levity; he saw deep into the heart of man. Dan never laughed at anyone; he laughed with him, as seeing in all human foibles a common heritage. No child was ever more direct, more without duplicity, so transparent.

"He entered any gathering and was at home at once. In five minutes the gathering was at home with him and took him to its heart. His personality was his entrée to any assemblage of men or women. What a host he must have been in later years! A stranger, by this title, had first claim in his eyes to all the courtesies of his graceful hospitality.

"To be more intimate, what a love he had for the Blessed Sacrament and for the Holy Mother of God! Not obtruded, sacredly hid away; but to the close view of a friend, clearly visible deep in his heart, real, personal. Such

is the memory I hold of Dan as he was in his early years.

"If Father Coffey of later years fulfilled the promise that winsome Dan Coffey gave in his youth, then he must have grown to the full stature of the ideal friend of men and the ideal priest of God."

These clever outline sketches of young Coffey's character bring him up before the mind's eye as completely in a few words as a bookful of description could do. The character, we can see at once, is still in solution, but gives distinct promise of the fine crystallization that it took on with the years.

The one strongly outstanding quality, emphasized in every phrase, is at once the loveliest and most reassuring quality of youth—openness of soul. "One always knew just where he stood. Subterfuge was not in him." Candor, sincerity, geniality, frankness, are other words lighting up the same ideal and are all based upon a genuine personal love of God and His Mother. Over and through them all played the flash of a brilliant wit.

Even the limitations indicated are what we should normally anticipate. Impulsive outspokenness, independence, a touch of flippancy are less limitations than the yet unchecked

overflow of good qualities, and are full of promise, because back of them we observe the check already in operation—Dan was conscientious. This means that he would not repeat mistakes along the same line very often. Altogether, a character presaging swift energy, always above board, with an eager instinct for justice, a capacity for winning confidence and an irrepressible and sunny wit.

In the retort of college, Dan was to go through the blending, solidifying, reducing process that would harmonize all these qualities and bring them to move as one force. Naturally, the first thing that came in for a trimming was Dan's wit.

One of the pet resentments of the modern elective system of education is its resentment against any kind of "trimming" for the student. "And above all things, to attack wit!" they will exclaim, lifting solemnly a theoretic hand in a pedagogic horror. "Why trim wit? Why freeze the genial current of the soul? Why hamper originality? Why flatten the sacred effervescence of youth?"

Any common sense business man would puncture this "sob stuff" in a single sentence, "Wit should be trimmed for the reason we trim anything, rosebushes, beards, apple pies, boats.

Trimming makes them look better, grow better, go better."

Fortunately for Dan Coffey he was in a college that made it a business to study boys, and to know them individually. Let us observe here that in a college of this kind, the college learns from the boy just as the boy learns from the college. It is impossible for any college faculty to come into close and sympathetic contact with hundreds of boys year after year and not to derive from such contact a cumulative knowledge of all the winding ways of youth, an unfailing instinct in judging whether a boy is going up hill or down, and a practical power of influencing each boy so as to wean him away from evil and urge him to good. A traditional manner of handling boys grows into a college faculty, a college spirit that perpetuates itself and improves with time; and it has really been derived from the boys themselves. The faculty may undergo changes but the rooted traditions remain. Individual members of the teaching body may not grasp the college spirit, but it will grow around them and through them, remaining always fresh, active, adaptable to changing conditions. Because the constant inflow of new characters among the students keeps the faculty just

enough on the defensive to let it see when and where to attack.

Out of this perennial contest, for it is nothing less, between the faculty and the boy, there arises a college spirit in the former the keynote of which is a sense of justice toward the boy. As a member of several college faculties of this type, I have always observed this steady trend of fair dealing toward the student. Isolated cases may have arisen where fairness was not evident at the beginning, but as the wheels went around, this was invariably eliminated and justice arrived for the boy at the end, without petting the boy either, or making him feel that he was a world conqueror.

Among the things such a college appreciates in its boys are wit and humor, the lubricators of what were otherwise dry intellectual friction grinding the soul to powder. The genuine college knows that wit and humor are the wings of wisdom. Without them no man is truly wise. He may be lean, learned and lugubrious, but without the luminosity of wit his soul yawns before us like an open grave. It is the pseudo-educator who would remove the merry Maypole dance from the intellectual training ground and would blight the blossom-

ing of youth by substituting penumbral pacings around a catafalque.

All this is far from saying, however, that wit should not be trimmed. Unchecked, wit has the tendency to be like lightning, brilliant but terrifying. It should be more like the aurora borealis, flashing up with new and unforseen beauty but leaving a glow of pleasure at its remembrance.

In later years Father Coffey spoke with gratitude of his training at St. Charles' College. He realized that it was there he got the first hints how to direct his wit until it became what we all knew it to be in after life, "sure fire" under every variety of circumstances, but always a joy forever.

Dan did not need more than a hint to adjust himself to the conditions of college life. He never needed clubbing to get an idea. His mind was so quick, he saw with so swift an intuition to the end of any path that a word was sufficient to set him in the right direction. Once started he never stopped.

I have heard him say that one wit unchecked was enough to ruin a college. The reason is obvious. It is one boy in a thousand who is genuinely witty. In that same thousand there are at least a hundred who think them-

selves witty. These will be merely the crude imitators of the leader and nothing can be more shocking to the intelligent than the clumsy and disorderly fumblings of a "near wit." Like a stick of dynamite with a half inch fuse, he produces nothing but noise and disastrous wreckage. He must be stopped. Indeed, a good definition of a college faculty would be "a society for the prevention of imaginary wit." No boy has anything like a liberal education if he leaves college belonging to the class of "near wits."

For the good of the human race, therefore, Daniel was forced frequently to submerge. Like a good boat, he obeyed the signals and went under, but like a good boat he came up again after a sufficient interval and periscoped cheerfully about once more.

I have before me an album filled with choice mottoes and signed with the names of schoolboy friends, many of whom have since become distinguished in the Church and in professional life.

It was one of Dan's treasures, kept in his desk at Mingo where doubtless he often turned over its pages and lived again his boy life among his early friends. The introductory page holds Dan's personal request:

To my friends:

Kindly inscribe a few lines, that in future years I may have that priceless pleasure of conversing with those who by their congenial society lightened the burdens of my life, whom I hope some day to meet face to face in that Place where there shall be no separation, but eternal bliss and the sweet presence of the God of friendship. Christmas, 1890.

The album is mostly filled with the customary good wishes and the conventional advice which youth deals out so solemnly in copybook fashion, with the "So-live-that-when-thy-summons-come-to-join" tone running through it. But back of this the human note gives a cricket chirp. Off in little corners of the pages are mystic dates, cryptic quotations, pass-words to hidden storehouses of fun, known only to the initiated; so that on many pages after telling Dan to be good and he would be happy, and adjuring him never, never to be naughty, the same hands, apparently, balanced the kite with tails like these: "Stop that making chocolate in French class"; "Oh, that noisy table for the sick boys"; "Remember —— and the gas jet"; "Wait for the wagon"; "What it mean?";

"Coffey, President of the Order of the Royal Pull"; "Ah, close your eyes just once"; "Did you get the ball, Dan?"

Each of these panels conceals a story. "What it mean?" for example, recalls a very delightful French professor, just from France, at the college and not yet able to speak English. In order to master the language with all possible speed, he spent most of the time with the boys in their recreations, gravitating toward those who he heard were expert in the English language. In this way he made the acquaintance of Daniel Coffey and several friends. They not only taught him very well, but they likewise ushered him into the inner shrine of English, the mysteries of slang. Only the Father did not know at the time that it was an inner shrine. He found that out later.

Returning to the Fathers' recreation one day, he proceeded to reveal his progress. Seating himself near one of the Fathers who had been suffering from headaches, he said sympathetically:

"Father, how is your swelled head?"

The Father addressed looked at him in astonishment. The quick French professor noted the look and asked:

"What it mean, 'swelled head'? *Je veux dire, Comment va vôtre mal à la tête?"*

He was gently told that the word for that was not "swelled head" but "headache."

This was his day for specializing in health phrases. So, shortly after, he ventured to ask a Father, "And how is your breadbasket?"

"Ah," again noting the startled look of the Father, "is it not correct, 'breadbasket'? What it mean—*vôtre estomac?"* exclaimed the professor.

After he had told various members of the faculty to "take their base," to "keep their shirt on" and had confidentially informed the Rector that "he made him tired," a quiet little investigation was started and the trail led to our friend Daniel. The class in modern English for French professors was discontinued.

Among contraband gifts to the students were meats of any kind. One Thanksgiving an enthusiastic relative sent Dan a fine turkey and told him it was on the way. Dan, hovering about the boxes that arrived, lit upon his own open box, and there lying in state in the center of a wealth of other choice edibles, was the most appetizing, oyster-stuffed turkey imaginable. He begged for the turkey as the one thing needed for a very weak stomach.

"Too bad, Dan," said the Prefect, "but the law is absolute."

"Ah, come, Father," Dan then laughingly said, "just close your eyes this once. I'm going to take my turkey."

"All right," said the Prefect, but with a sinister note, "but don't let me catch you."

"I don't intend to," said Dan; and as the Prefect turned momentarily aside, Dan whipped the turkey under his overcoat and hurried away.

The "Poor Eight" enjoyed a nice turkey dinner that night. Later Dan sent his coat to the cleaner. The Prefect discovered the joke and enjoyed it.

Although Dan was a recognized leader in the innocent fun of the school, he was never catalogued, either by the faculty or by the boys, as a "professional joker." Back of all the laughter and the light so constantly in the foreground, they saw the high, aspiring seriousness of his soul rising heavenward like a mountain.

The judgment of a group of boys upon the character of anyone with whom they associate familiarly, has about it an uncanny finality of truth. A single boy may easily be deceived. But a group of boys will flow over and seep

under a character like water around a rock. With an unconscious daring and a free-and-easy unceremoniousness, they will touch every angle, probe every shadowy nook and at the same moment, with the photographic accuracy of an X-ray, they will pluck out the very heart of the mystery. Each boy comes away with some particular note of the character he has explored. Then without premeditation, they all meet, pool their separate judgments, fuse them by the wizardry of some kind of spiritual chemistry, focus the result in a word and shout it out to the world for better or for worse. And that settles it. They have "sized up" their man and tagged him. Fifty years after, they will name him by that tag and the chances are a hundred to one that the name will fit him still.

Like all the rest, Dan Coffey went through the ordeal of search and seizure and he came out of it with the nickname "Dean." Among his classmates, Dan answered to that name all his life. What they really meant by the name is clear from the class prophecy, composed and read by one of Dan's fellow graduates. After distributing his mates along various walks of life, business, politics high and low, and the

professions, the prophet forecasts Dan's career in the following lines:

Afar and alone on the desert's hot sand,
With thoughts on his God and his beads in his hand,
A man lonely roams in excess of devotion,
His countenance eager, yet graceful his motion.
Announcing the Gospel, he's piously been
O'er ocean, up rivers, through forest and fen.
To heathens he's preached, an Apostle unshod,
Till the temples of Satan are ruined, downtrod.
"*Veni Creator!*"—we list as he sings—
Through sylvan cathedrals the echoing rings.
He wanders unawed through dark African mazes
And chants to his Maker the anthem of praises.
You're curious, now, that I tell you his name,
'Tis *Daniel* from Brooklyn, of cothurnate fame,
This holy apostle of Africa's shore
Is *Coffey*, Dean Coffey—why need I say more?

CHAPTER V

SOME LETTERS

WE have said that it was the fall of 1890 that Dan entered St. Charles' College. To be accurate he went there just before the close of school in June. He had been out of school a year, undecided as to his vocation. As soon as he had made up his mind to go on with his studies for the priesthood, he determined to begin at once. He arranged with the college authorities to study at St. Charles' during the summer so as to brush up in his work and be ready for a flying start in the fall. He writes some of his early impressions to his mother.

ST. CHARLES', June 27, 1890.

My Dear Mother:

Your letter was handed me yesterday after I arrived home from Baltimore where I had been seeing several of my student friends off. I felt very happy at hearing of your improve-

ment. Also that you contemplate going to the country.

When I came up to the college yesterday I found four letters waiting me, all from old friends. It was like a visit home.

They were particularly welcome as the students have all gone home with the exception of a few seminarians and about sixteen of ourselves, who are doing special work here during the vacation; so naturally it is somewhat gloomy. But as I intend to study hard I shall not find time to get blue.

If you were here you would enjoy seeing the many reminiscences of the war—historic old bridges, mills, houses all along the roads where the soldiers of both armies traveled. It brings close up to me the history I studied.

The country about is charming. A blue haze arises from the surrounding hills and these send a cool air over the place which makes it very healthful. The nights are cool and so far I have not slept without a blanket. Yesterday and the day before, you would melt in Baltimore. It is the hottest city one would wish to find. I was glad to get back from it.

Had you been at the depot to see those two hundred and more students bidding each other good-by, you would have been amazed. Such

good friends they are of one another! I, who have been at the place three weeks, had as much handshaking as if I had been there three years. All such a splendid lot of boys. Indeed I have made quite a number of friends and they are of the first order.

You ask me if I would like any fruit. My general answer, dear ma, to all such requests is going to be a shy "Yes." You know we rise at five and get breakfast around seven, so you can feel how weak Daniel must be at that time; but don't send any of that beef extract. No matter what the docs say about it, all I can say is that it makes me sick.

I am hungry and will stop here and attend to that. With my love to you and Pa and Kate, Joe, Maggie, Barth, Eugene, Jerry, Peter, aunts and all the children.

Your loving
DANIEL.

One of the characteristics of Daniel's boy letters is the long list of names of those whom he remembered. He was learning not only how to make friends but to hold them with a tenacity that grew with the years.

Boarding school letters are proverbially hard things to write. The exterior routine is

always the same and while the everyday incidents in a group of several hundred boys are sure to be interesting, yet the interest has so local an atmosphere that nobody except those on the inside can follow the fun. Dan felt this and said so. Some of his letters read like telegraph dispatches.

February 26, 1891.

Dear Mother:

Your letter reached me this evening and it was a treat to hear from you.

The big object of interest down here at present is a snow storm. You see we don't go very far in thrills. However, it is a change from the rain which has been coming three times a week lately.

I hear our Bishop is dying. I hope it is not true.

I hope you are taking care of your health and that Maggie is too. Please tell her not to go to any more processions. That's one of the best ways of getting pneumonia, standing in a lot of slushy snow to see a crowd go by. Queer she hasn't seen enough of those things.

As for news, I am a blank. Since I came back it has been merely one thing after another and all of them the same.

During Lent here we have nothing outside the ordinary services and it seems very little like the season as I have been accustomed to it at home. However, if we do what is required of us, we can hope for the same reward. I hope all of you are attending Lenten devotions as often as you can. Do not brave danger to go, nor go when you are unable.

I am feeling better than when I wrote before, and except for a slight headache now and then, I should feel O.K. My love to you and to all.

Your affectionate
DANIEL.

The headaches Dan mentions here were with him most of his life afterward and, though he was not aware of it, they presaged the end.

During the following year Mrs. Coffey's health failed somewhat and it was a cause of worry to Dan as is shown in a letter to his sister.

ST. CHARLES' COLLEGE,
Mar. 2, 1892.

Dear Joe:

Many thanks for your generous supply of news. It was refreshing to hear of people

and things up home. I only regret that I cannot reciprocate in kind.

Poor Mother! How often I think of her. Not a night, or even any part of the day passes that I do not think of her. I am determined that she and I shall have a very nice time to ourselves all next summer. I shall keep clear of all "stragglers."

When I read of the boys making the mission I was delighted. I know they will be blessed for it. That Father D—— cured a girl in Boston recently, who had been a cripple for years. She and he prayed to Our Lady of Perpetual Help and it was not long until she was perfectly cured. She is now a nun in a convent in Boston.

Do you know, I felt terrible when I heard what happened to poor Mopsy, for I did like that dog.

I am puzzled, Joe, what else to write you from this place. You know that nothing happens here. I'll say good-by then and send my love to Father, Mother, Kate, Maggie and the boys, not forgetting the dog and puss. Pray to St. Joseph for me. I need his help this year so very much. Ask him to help me and to grant my special intention. You will see

that mother does not have anything hard to do, like a good girl. With love,

DANIEL.

One of the traditions, privileges, or, as he would put it, one of the "sacred duties" of a boarding school boy is to attack the "grub." It is one of his favorite indoor and outdoor sports. Indoor—implying a fierce dental attack three times a day. Outdoor—a scathing verbal attack on the general theme, "The way we suffer." Perhaps it is unfair to limit this characteristic to the boarding school boy. Any group of men, say in the army or navy, who lead a routine life, will make the "grub" their main point of attack. During the late war, I have seen big men, who left responsible positions to enlist, who had never in their lives given two thoughts to the matter of food, sitting in the midst of their mates and "bouncing the chow" with a comic viciousness; and they were a pink portrait of health at the moment, transformed from the sickly civic yellow tint they brought with them a few weeks before. The boarding school boy, however, has always been the recognized champion at this game, the only drawback being that his appearance invariably belies his words. Dan contributes a punch or two to the great cause.

St. Charles', December 6, 1892.

Dear Joe:

Nothing pleased me more than to hear that Jimmie was looking so well. Although I should say nothing about the scamp since he did not answer my letter of some time ago. He dare not plead any excuse.

'Tis well mother did not send me my plum pudding, for it would have gone where the cake went. Tell mother the cake went to the "poor," so I was not in on it. But if it struck any poorer person than myself, he, or she, was welcome to it. There is nothing more laughable than inconsistency. You will be allowed candy, which I am not very fond of; and that which might give you an appetite is given to the "poor." Well, such is life, but there is one consolation that life is not stationary. It gets a move on it once in a while.

Ask Kate if she will make me a few sponge cakes and send them down for Christmas. Even her cooking, or even yours, would go well down here.

I will not ask Maggie to write, since I know she has enough to do with her sick one. Tell me what is the trouble. I am very anxious to know. Nothing serious, I hope.

My love now to Mother, Pa, Kate, Maggie

and the boys with yourself, "Flanagan," not forgetting "Chickens."

Your loving brother,

DANIEL.

P.S. Since I finished this something happened. You know they do not allow us cake except at Christmas, so they took mine. Well, I said nothing but let them take it; and I went on the sly to good old Kate and she got it for me by stealing it from the kitchen; and not only the one that was taken but another one with it. Such a feast as we had! I have some of it yet. Myself and Tim, whom Jimmie knows, have our cocoa and lunch all to ourselves on holidays. Tim is the organist and has a room; hence, I am in it, too. He brought a stock with him of all sorts of good things with some cocoa, and I with mine, we get a pretty good lunch. I often think, "What's the use of knocking the grub? It comes back at you like a punching bag anyway."

Yours,

DANIEL.

During the summer of 1893 Daniel visited Chicago and the World's Fair. His impres-

sions are given in a letter to his sister. "Bill," mentioned in the letter, is Father William Ryan; and "Joe Lynch's place" is the boyhood home of the now Right Reverend Joseph Lynch, D.D., the present Bishop of Dallas, Texas.

CHICAGO, August 25, 1893.

My Dear Josie:

I suppose you have become weary of postals and would enjoy a long letter. This will not be a long letter though, because I am so rushed that I haven't the time. How did Mother and Kate enjoy their sojourn in the mountains? And how are "Chickens" and all at home? My love to them one and all.

On Saturday morning last, Bill and I started for St. Joe, Michigan—Joe Lynch's place—and remained there till Sunday night, crossing the lake both ways. St. Joe is nothing but fruit farms. Our friend has miles and miles of grapes, peaches, pears, berries. All we had to do was to go and pluck them, drink rich milk and eat homemade bread. Such a feast!

We went to St. Joseph's Church in the morning. The idea seemed to be that I was to sing at the Offertory and Bill was to play;

but we wouldn't. We saw the whole place and returned reluctantly Sunday night; then we went to Lemont and thence to a friend's in Joliet. Was all through the prison, several churches and saw the principal places in the town. Bill came up from Lemont in the evening. They took us out for a drive, and when we returned there was a house full of company and we were entertained till all hours. Oh, such people! The only way I could tear myself from them was to promise that I would return for a few days before I left for home.

Wednesday I took in Milwaukee and came down by night boat all through the lake. It was glorious. Last night, the Midway Plaisance at the Fair! If you could only see the Plaisance! Chinese theaters, Turks, Zulus, Igorrotes, every crazy thing in creation. I am sore from laughing. To-day is colored folks day at the Fair. They are out in swarms. I am resting to-day making ready for Sunday.

I suppose things are rushing up home. Well, give me Chicago. I like it very much. I somehow think I'd like to live here. Perhaps I might. I have certainly made many friends and I like the city. When I shall return has not for a moment given me a thought.

How long I shall stay seems to be my predominating cogitation at present.

How is Jerry? Give him my love. I'll give him something else when I get rich. Has Maggie gone to the country? Is she well? I do not know why she does not write. I shall always remember her exceeding kindness to me.

Send me all the news from dear old Brooklyn, especially of the home. My love to Father Hickey and Father Farrell.

Affectionately,

DANIEL.

CHAPTER VI

TOWARD THE ALTAR

DURING the next six years Daniel Coffey moved steadily ahead through his studies, the classics, philosophy, theology; following the regular course of the candidate for the priesthood at St. Mary's, Baltimore, a year in Canada, and finally at the University of Niagara, New York. His year in Canada was necessitated by reasons of health. It was partly devoted to teaching English, and it gave him valuable help later for the practical direction of his school. That he was a successful professor may be gathered from the following sketch, a memory of those days, by the Very Reverend Father Charlebois, now the Superior General of the Viatorians. He writes:

"Father Daniel Coffey taught for our Order at Bourget College, Rigaud, Canada. I was then the Superior of the College and though it is now a long time ago, I have never forgotten the devout, intelligent, active and always happy-humored man that Father Coffey

always was. In the midst of the professors he had ever ready a word to evoke a smile, or to rouse their courage. For life with those young professors was not always of a roseate hue.

"These young men were grouped in narrow rooms, entirely devoid of the least luxuries in furnishings; but they knew how to make the most of their surroundings and what was denied to them in one way they made up in another. A tone of happiness, contentment, even gayety ever prevailed there. As the walls which separated their rooms consisted of thin board partitions, often their joyous conversations could be heard easily from one end of the corridor to the other and at times the Superior, passing that way, was called upon to check their hilarity. A single word was sufficient and never do I remember having to give a severe reprimand. An 'All right' from Dan was a guarantee for himself and his companions.

"Father Coffey was a genuine professor and gave himself heart and soul to his work. He loved his pupils and was in turn loved by them. Not only was his teaching of a high order, for he knew as few do how to make his subject matter interesting, agreeable and profitable,

but he was a companion of his pupils, joining happily with them in their recreations, thus rendering them further service by helping them to put into practice what he had taught them in class.

"Of course his principal duty was his personal studies, as at this time he was preparing for the priesthood, and I must say that neither his gayety nor his work for others ever distracted Dan Coffey from the end he had in view. He wished to be a priest and indeed he had all the aptitude and every quality required for the priesthood. He knew how to be serious and laborious when necessary and he arrived at his goal, where he proved his ability, skill and extraordinary worth.

"His theological science, added to his keen insight into character, was of the utmost practical help to the souls in his care; and the art of preaching held no secrets from him. Father Coffey held important posts and his work was admirable.

"I visited him in 1902 and had the occasion to congratulate him upon his success as an administrator, an organizer and a director of souls. I found he had accomplished marvelous things and I was indeed proud of his success in the holy ministry."

It is evident from these words of Father Charlebois that the striking many-sidedness of Dan Coffey's character was well on the way to its perfect growth of after years. He could be gay and yet dependable; could interest youth in the classroom and, as well, on the playground; accept direction, or even correction, intelligently and cheerfully; could interest himself deeply in others and not forget himself and his duties in all their details. The "joy of life" had its personification in Daniel Coffey. He lived intensely, laboriously, swiftly, yet with such a glow and a sparkle and a sunniness woven into his work, that an air of ease and playfulness made the most difficult task seem simple. In the words of one who knew him well, "His brilliancy attracted friends and his solidity retained them."

It was with regret, then, that his friends at Bourget College saw him depart, to take up his theology at Niagara University. There he settled to his work at once. The usual note of happy contentment is in his letters.

NIAGARA, N. Y., May 17, 1898.

My Dear Ma:

I suppose you have me booked as a careless lad for keeping you so long without a letter.

I thought I wrote to you last week but discovered only recently that I had not. How are your eyes? I pray the good St. Paul that he will be your friend and cure you. There is an old man here who has just been cured of a cataract and now sees as well as ever; and Will Ryan writes me of many old people who have been cured where he is having his eyes attended to. Cheer up, now, and when I go home we will have our old rambles together.

I do not know when we shall leave here but it will be some time around June 23rd. The students seem so happy here that vacation never enters their mind. We are living in a beautiful place. There are miles and miles of blossoming fruit trees and a country far more lovely than any I have ever seen. My friends tell me that I am looking wonderfully well of late. I am waiting for them to tell me that I am good looking but they haven't gone that far yet. Anyhow I have gained eight pounds in the past few months and, thank God, never felt better.

Tell me how you all are at home and how the war is using you. It is nothing but war up this way and the papers are full of it. The country around is draped in the Stars and Stripes.

Now, dear, write soon and tell me how your eyes are. By the way, did Jerry receive that picture of the Maine I sent him? If anyone has any spare silver dollars about him, tell him to start them rolling this way. I'll stop them before they go over the Falls.

Yours always,
DANIEL.

The year 1899 brought to a close the long years of preparation. In March of this year Dan was ordained to the deaconship and on May 27th he was made a priest. On the occasion of his deaconship he wrote the following letter to his mother, which reveals depths in his soul which, with native reticence, he rarely allowed to appear even to those who were nearest to him.

NIAGARA, N. Y., March 20, 1899.

My Dear Mother:

I know you will feel glad and rejoice with me on the happiest day of my life. Last Saturday I was raised to the deaconship and received the Holy Spirit, I hope with all His gifts.

Yes, the happiest day of my life—when prostrate at the foot of the altar, I did not

forget you. I offered myself to God to do all for Him and I asked that you might be spared to me, that He might give you your sight and bless you with His best gifts. I prayed for Kate to become strong and I know He will hear my prayer. I prayed for Father, for Joe and Maggie, for Eugene and Barth, for my good friend Jerry; for all of you and your intentions.

The most solemn moment of my life was when the Bishop placed his hand on my head and the stole on my shoulders, called down the Holy Ghost upon me and gave me the power to touch our Lord in the Holy Sacrament; to carry Him in necessity and to serve Him purely and chastely.

I did not even then forget you, and I feel in my heart that you and Kate will have your health and that the others shall have favors from Him in proportion to their needs. I remembered you all in my first Office and I shall continue to do so every day.

The prayer I first came upon in the Office was this: "Thy prayers have been heard from the beginning, Daniel," said by the Angel Gabriel to Daniel the Prophet, but as I look over my life I feel that the Angel then spoke to me also.

I have but one step to the priesthood. Pray for me with all your hearts. Ask God to make me strong and ready to do His work. Thank Him and His Mother for all they have done; and whatever He bids me to do, ask that we may all wish according to His will. Love to all of you and God bless and keep you.

Yours with love,

DANIEL.

Across the top of the page is written: "This letter is *strictly private, for the family.*"

CHAPTER VII

EARLY DAYS IN THE MINISTRY

AFTER his ordination Father Coffey was sent to St. Dominic's Church, Columbus, Ohio, to assist the Reverend Father O'Reilly, who had built up single-handed a very fine parish in what was then the suburbs of the city. Father O'Reilly was not long in seeing the capacity of Father Coffey and as he had not had a rest for many years, he turned the whole management of the parish over to Father Coffey after a few weeks, and enjoyed a summer's vacation.

Father Coffey took up the work and following strictly along the lines of the parish methods as established by the pastor, became so great a favorite with the congregation in a few short months that he is vividly and gratefully remembered by the parish, priest and people, to this day. On a recent visit there, I found those who were children at that time still recalling with a smile his happy sayings

and his games with them. The older people spoke with deep affection of his many kindnesses, his attentiveness to the sick and the sunshine he spread in an already sunny parish.

Upon the return of Father O'Reilly, Father Coffey was given his first official appointment, to assist at St. Anthony's Church, Bridgeport, Ohio. Father Joseph A. Weigand, the present pastor of the fine parish of the Holy Name in Steubenville, was then the pastor in Bridgeport. We can get an idea of the year's work of Father Coffey there from a letter to his mother.

St. Anthony's Church
Bridgeport, Ohio, August 31, 1899.

My Dear Ma:

Here I am settled in my new home. I left Columbus on Saturday last, having been appointed to this place. I like it very much and am quite happy. Bridgeport is just opposite Wheeling, West Virginia, on the Ohio side of the river. It is situated in a lovely part of the Ohio Valley, and it reminds me very much of the cities along the Hudson, mountains and valleys and the Ohio River winding all along the country for miles.

Business is rushing this way—glass manu-

facturing, iron mills, the mines and one hundred other kinds of trades are all on full time. All the works that have been idle since the panic are again rushing ahead on increased wages. The people all seem happy and prosperous. I hope they will continue so.

The church here is called after St. Anthony of Padua. It is a very beautiful church, set upon a hill and in the heart of the pines and maples. It is of solid brick, nicely decorated and over the main altar stands St. Anthony who, with the Infant, looks down upon me as I say Mass. The picture of Our Lady of Perpetual Help and of the Infant of Prague are here, too.

I like the church and the people. Every day fresh fruit, butter and vegetables, grapes in plenty and anything else that comes in season.

The priest of St. Dominic's was quite pleased with my management of things and I made many friends among the people. I was very much at home there. Tell Miss Josie she need not go up to the Swedish church any more as St. Anthony at this place will do anything she wants. Only that the distance is so great I would have Kate, Chickens, Grace and Pa come and spend a *day* with me.

Our school opens on Monday next. Have you moved yet? I hope you are all well and happy. I said Mass for Barth on Saturday last, St. Bartholomew's day. I remember you all every day at Mass.

Yours with love,
DANIEL.

Father Coffey took a short trip to New York shortly after this and upon his return wrote the following note to his mother.

BRIDGEPORT, October 12, 1899.

My Dear Ma:

I suppose you received my postal. I am safely back and the people are glad I returned. The children of the school prepared a little entertainment of welcome, and I was received with great applause from the little ones—a regular Dewey reception. The Sisters, too, were glad to see me and surprised me with a very pretty surplice. Lasso, my dog, took a whole day to show his welcome. He is with me all the time.

I was glad to get back from the noise of New York. The hills all about are tinged with the frosts of autumn and the weather is charming. The people are working hard for the fair and I

think they have nearly five hundred dollars in money and articles. I am giving a course of instructions every Wednesday night on the Rosary and intend to start one on the Mass Sunday evenings.

I enjoyed those buns. I passed them around to advertise you and everyone thought they were lovely. My love to all at home. I have not forgotten any of you in my Masses and you I remember especially.

With love,
DANIEL.

The following year Father Coffey was assigned to organize a parish in Barnesville, Ohio, and there he began his work as a pastor. It was a really a reorganizing that he had before him. A parish had been started in the town some years before, but a series of setbacks had so paralyzed its activities that for a time previous to Father Coffey's coming no priest had been assigned to the place. It had been a small congregation dependent upon a glass works for employment, and as these had been in operation only a few months of the year during the several years previous, the people had necessarily become transients. On the heels of these woes,

the church burned down. There were no funds to rebuild and a death-like state of coma followed. Father Coffey was asked to revivify the corpse.

It wasn't much of a prospect that he faced the summer afternoon he left the train and started for the top of the highest hill in the neighborhood. For that was where his residence was to be. He climbed the hill to his house and took an inventory, to wit:

Item—One house, warped into a clever imitation of the Leaning Tower of Pisa.

Item—One cemetery; weed-grown and neglected; tombstones peering spookily over tangles of reeds and long grass. "It was the most realistic cemetery I ever lived in," said Father Dan. "You could be sure they were dead in there, or they would never have stood for the treatment they were getting."

Item—One large heap of blackened beams, timbers, half-burned boards, chimney bricks and broken glass that used to be a church. Beyond these, on all sides around him—the horizon.

"I was like St. Simon Stylites," he used to say in describing it, "alone on the top of a pillar. Only if I remember rightly, St. Simon used to have a crowd of live persons gathered

at the foot of the pillar. All I had around me were dead ones."

The records by no means tell us, however, that Father Dan sat dolorously down on the threshold of his house and burying his face in his hands, gave one long melodramatic moan over all sad things that were and that were yet to be. Tears, idle tears, were never a part of his program.

The first thing he did was to start "into the jungle" as he called it, to hunt up his parishioners. He liked them, liked everything they did. He praised their town, their little homes, their work. He got close to the children, had them all by their first names, Jack, Billy, Margaret, Mary, until in a minute they were no more afraid of him than they were of each other. He even praised the church, what was left of it. "What a wonderful location it has!" he said, with a hidden meaning, we suspect, in the word "wonderful." Before the people knew it he had stolen into their hearts.

Then he invited his friends among the clergy to visit him. "Come," he wrote, "and enjoy the rare atmosphere and the marvelous view. It's like living in a balloon. If you have never made a pilgrimage in your life, now is the time. Come to the Holy Hill."

On spare days they visited him. He showed them over the house. "After living in this house a week," he said, "you could walk a tight rope in a circus." He took them outside for the view.

"A beautiful location for a church!" he commented. "Here you have a commanding view of whole counties at a glance. With the aid of a spyglass I can see in a second just how my parish is going; and in case of a flood, they'll all come to church. They're certain to be safe here. Sure, the Catholics of Barnesville are favored above all. Dead or alive, they're nearer heaven."

Of course, he would admit, with apparent reluctance, what he termed "the natural drawbacks." In summer it was too hot for the parishioners to climb the hill and in winter it was too slippery for them even to attempt it.

After this, Father Coffey would take his visitor out to call on the people. When they saw so many priests coming to Barnesville, they were amazed. They had not been aware that their town was so important. They had thought that not one priest could live in Barnesville. Now they saw them making pilgrimages to the place.

Meantime Father Coffey was on the watch.

At first he said Mass in his house, which under the conditions was sufficiently large to answer the needs of that portion of the congregation who could get there. To answer the convenience of all his people, however, he must have a more central and accessible location. The only place he could possibly find was a large store in the town. It had been to let for so long a time that only tradition told of a tenant.

Father Coffey rented the place and it did not take him long to find the source of the tradition. Up to this time his troubles had come from above. Now they began to come from below. Barnesville is somewhat of a railroad town and directly underneath his "church" ran a net of tracks, with switch engines, freight and passenger locomotives dashing and panting and puffing and whistling constantly. The "church" was built out over the railroad's right of way.

The first Sunday there, Father Coffey said a High Mass, and though he had a much better congregation than up on the hill, the noise of the trains was frightful.

"I hope the Lord will forgive me for bringing Him to such a place," said Father Dan, speaking to a brother priest a few days after. "I never felt so guilty; it was like a burlesque

on the ceremonies of the Church. I sang the *'Dominus vobiscum'* and I was answered by a whistle that was inspired by Lucifer. I started to preach and tons of smoke rolled in through the windows until I couldn't see my congregation and every time I breathed I nearly choked. It didn't seem like ordinary smoke, either. It came up from the lower regions. I began the Preface and they began ringing bells down below me that gave me the distracting thought, 'If you weren't cast in hell, you ought to be.' I'll never forget that terrible morning and I hope God will forgive me, for He knows I didn't mean it. But that place is impossible."

Father Dan had the great gift of tunneling in the dark and of singing as he tunneled. He needed every bit of his gift to make the right start in Barnesville. He began looking for another spot for his church. Ultimately, he knew, he would have to build. The thing to do was to acquire a building site. He looked over the town and found a site just suited for a church and a house. This piece of ground had been listed for sale and the price advertised. Father Coffey called on the owner who had the reputation in the town of being rather too shrewd. Father Dan was not aware of

this at the time so he told his sad story fully to the owner.

"We are forced to buy," he concluded, "but our location here will be a good thing for you, also. It will bring Catholics around the church and thus enable you to sell your other holdings.

"Yes, I see," replied the owner; "and I shall do what I can, Father; but property has gone up rapidly just lately and the best price I can make for you is ——" and he named a price hundreds of dollars above the listed price.

Father Dan said not a word but started out of the office. He was followed to the door by the owner.

"Just a moment, Father," said he. "Considering what you have said, I think I may be able to—er— adjust that price. How about ——?" and he named the original listed price.

"I wouldn't take it from you now as a gift," said Father Dan and he left the office.

Quite by accident Father Dan met a friend in a neighboring city where he happened to be visiting, and their conversation drifted to the recently attempted purchase of the building lot and of the apparently final failure.

"I am very glad you tell me all this," said the friend. "I happen just now to be buying

land in Barnesville myself and if I mistake not we have had in view, among other pieces, the precise lots you describe. If we can get them they are yours at the price we pay for them."

Within a week Father Coffey had the lots and at a much lower figure than the original offer. He did not take much pains, either, to keep the particulars of the deal a secret. The whole town knew it in a few days and the stock of the Catholic priest jumped several points for his outwitting of the "sharpest man in town."

"It was all luck and no sense," said Father Dan; "but I'd rather have luck than sense. It proves that the Lord is with the simple," and he assumed a canonized look of childlike naïveté which more than hinted that he had at least sense enough to enjoy his luck.

CHAPTER VIII

ANOTHER TUNNEL

FATHER DAN had dug the first tunnel through, only to face another and, apparently, a rockier prospect. What about a church?

He could not at this time ask his people to build a church. They did not have the money. As we have said, the congregation was small, the work at the glass factory intermittent. They had all they could do to tide themselves across the "slack" periods.

Father Dan offered many prayers to Our Lady of Perpetual Help, watching while he prayed. He discovered that the Methodists of the town had plans for a new church and were offering the old church at a mere kindling-wood price. Father Dan looked over the building and saw he could easily transform it into a church well suited to his needs.

"It was a great chance to get something for nothing," he said.

He bought the church, the pews, lectern, organ and bell. After the place had passed into Father Coffey's hands, the vacating congregation asked him if they might have few farewell reunions for the sake of old times. Permission was readily granted and they had three reunions. The children had one, the young men and women another, and finally the old people gathered for a last meeting in the old church. It was purely a social meeting. Father Coffey was invited to attend and he did, mingling in his happy way with all the guests. At the close he was invited to say a few words. He mounted a platform and said:

"My dear friends, it is and always will be a great pleasure to me to know you and remember you. It is an equal pleasure to think that you have contributed as you have done, to the Catholic Church, and I am sure God will bless you for it. I shall pray often for you all at Mass in this church and one of the blessings I am going to ask for you is that when you have your new church finished, you will do just what you have done here—invite me and my congregation to take it over, remain with us yourselves and we'll all be Catholics together, 'one Church and one Shepherd.' Whatever you do, though, you will not forget

that to-night you are witnessing the unheard-of situation of a Catholic priest being pastor of the Catholic and the Methodist churches at the same time, as is evidenced from the 'power of the keys' I have here before you." And he held up the keys of the church.

The old Methodist residents of the town still remember that night and that speech.

Everything now looked bright. A house-mover was called in, measurements were taken, figures given on the moving proposition. Suddenly another rock rose right up in the middle of the stream—an impassable rock. The house-mover met him at the church one day and flattened the jubilant pastor by saying:

"Sorry, Father, but we can't move this church."

"In the name of God, why not?" gasped Father Dan.

"The measurements show that the streets are entirely too narrow for it. We can't begin to think of moving it."

"Don't talk to me," said Father Dan. "Leave me, or I'll say something terrible about you and the streets of Barnesville and the people who made them."

Father Ryan of Chicago, was visiting with

him at this time in his hilltop house. He saw Father Coffey coming up the hill so slowly that he guessed something had happened.

"It's all over," said Father Dan, looking tragically into space, and he told the worst.

"I had a white church on my hands," he concluded, "but I'll swear someone has turned it into a white elephant."

After a melancholy evening together they went to bed. In the early hours of the morning, Father Ryan was awakened by a series of vigorous thumpings and a voice calling,

"Wake up, wake up!"

"What for? what for?" answered Father Ryan, grand opera fashion, thinking at the same moment of fire, flood and volcanoes.

"I've got an idea," said the voice, recognized now as Father Dan's.

"That's worth waking up for," said Father Ryan. "What can it be?"

"I've been thinking," continued Father Dan. "I haven't the authority to widen those streets, but I'll wager we can narrow that church by cutting it in two and driving it tandem down to the new place. It's a go!"

It was a "go." The house-mover was recalled. At first he was amazed at the notion, but soon he saw that it was entirely practicable.

The church was cut in half and moved easily along the narrow streets of Barnesville.

Meantime twenty feet were added to the foundation. The two pieces were hitched together again, the addition built and in a very short time all was ready for the dedication. It is a beautiful little church to-day.

In the same period, the congregation built a fine rectory and the prosperity of the parish was mounting to the crest.

Father Coffey was very happy in Barnesville as his letters show.

ST. MARY'S OF THE ASSUMPTION
BARNESVILLE, OHIO,
August 14, 1901.

Dear Ma:

Your letter came last week and shortly after came Father Harvey. I was delighted to see him and to learn you were all well.

We are rushing things along for the church and so far I am quite pleased with the work. The people of the town, both Protestant and Catholic, are surprised that in a few months so much has been done. I intend to have it painted, decorated and ready before the fall. If possible, I will then go to Brooklyn and bring you out here.

Frank was greatly surprised at the beauty of our city here; and he could not get over my swell house. He preached a beautiful sermon for me Sunday last.

I wish I had you here. You would enjoy it, I am sure. The fruit is ripening and the weather becoming cool. Write to me soon. I will let you know later about the beds from Bergemot. Love to all.

DANIEL.

The next letter reflects the troubles he had with his "divided" church.

ST. MARY'S OF THE ASSUMPTION
BARNESVILLE, OHIO,
September 5, 1901.

Dear Ma:

Josie's letter of some days ago at hand. I am quite busy here and shall have to postpone my little trip to Atlantic City and Cape May until I see my way out of these difficulties.

The delays in the work have put back the dedication of my church and at present I cannot tell when it will be ready. However, as I must wait, there is no use in worrying.

I heard from Father Hickey the other day.

Our peach crop here is most abundant. My

peaches are dropping from the trees. I have more than I can use. My grapes are pretty nearly ripe and I intend to make grape wine next week. I wish you were here to enjoy this lovely autumn.

I will soon need a housekeeper, as the one I have intends to leave. Do you know where I could get a good, *clean* person for the fall? I want none who cough over the stove or wash their faces in the dishpan. The person must be neat, tidy around the house, be at home all the time and free from all care. No bedbugs will be allowed in the house. The salary will be first class for a first class person but no slovens need apply.

Love to all.

DANIEL.

The jubilant note returns in the following letter when all the wrinkles in the hitherto trying situation seem to be ironed out.

ST. MARY'S OF THE ASSUMPTION
BARNESVILLE, OHIO.

Dear Josie:

Your letter at hand and I admit I was rather hasty; but I've had enough to bother me here without annoyance from all points of the globe.

Larry and his wife came this morning to my delight. They were greatly surprised at the beauty of my home and could not believe that I was only a year here to-day. I tell you my house is a beauty.

Last night we had a lawn fête on our lawn and I had all the "swell" people of the town in attendance. The church was moved without a break and already they are starting to put the roof on it. It is the wonder of the town that we could move it and have everything in shape so soon. The man who moved the church gave me the price of a magnificent statue of the Sacred Heart.

Everything is going lovely and soon we will have a church such as our congregation deserves. I had a picture "Before" and I'll have one taken "After." I'll send them home.

Already I am to have *four marriages* and as soon as the church is finished I expect more. This is a great town for marriages and I am doing all I can to encourage the good work. Larry and his wife will stay here over Sunday. I have plenty of room.

Where I live would remind you of Bay Ridge, with rows of beautiful summer homes. The housekeeper I now have reminds me very much of you. Wherever she puts anything no

one else can find it. She is very careful of the house, though, and very neat; which also reminds me of you, I must say.

Tell ma I have a lovely room for her if she will come. Love to all.

DANIEL.

The little congregation blossomed and bloomed, growing in age and grace and wisdom before God and man. Once the waters started flowing they rippled on joyously, and Father Coffey always recalled his four years there with something like merriment. As later in Mingo, he was known to the whole town and country around and every memory they have of him to-day, people of all creeds, is a memory of admiration and affection, with the affection predominant.

It was in Barnesville in 1901, that the eminent traveler and lecturer, John L. Stoddard, first met Father Coffey and their friendship lasted until the end. The following sprightly poem, an invitation in verse to Father Coffey to visit the author in his Tyrolean villa, was regarded by Father Coffey as one of his cherished souvenirs and it was found, carefully saved, after his death.

VILLA POMONA, MERAN, TYROL
Jan. 20, 1905.

Dear Friend and Father
You know I'd rather
Talk with you freely and face to face;
But no resistance
Can vanquish distance
When separated by so much space.

So I'm inditing
This bit of writing
To send this morning from sweet Meran
Direct to Mingo
(Queer name, by Jingo!)
And may it find you a happy man!

Will's crossed the ocean!
With deep emotion
We saw him leaving the halting train;
His mammoth shoulders,
Like mountain boulders,
Caused many natives to look again.

He cried out "Sister,"
And ran and kissed her
And laughing said, as he squeezed my hand,
"Thank God, I'm hearing
In tones endearing
The mother tongue of my native land!

To saints be glory,
I'm hunky-dory!
I've safely traversed the ocean blue!

No homesick feeling
Is o'er me stealing,
For just at present my home's with you."

And so by working
And never shirking,
He's learned already to typewrite well;
His face is ruddy
Despite his study;
How much he's learning, 'tis time will tell.

Forgive this lingo,
And leave old Mingo,
And cross the ocean to fair Tyrol!
A short vacation
For recreation
Will re-create you in mind and soul.

We three will meet you,
And warmly greet you,
And show you mountains of dazzling snow,
And lovely flowers,
And Roman towers,
And much more also, before you'd go.

And if you're able,
A billiard table
You could be using from morn till night,
Or else be reading
The books you're needing;
I have two thousand—a welcome sight!

So, Friend and Father,
Your ducats gather,
And buy a ticket across the sea
To entertain you
And never pain you
This friendly trio will guarantee.
Yours cordially,
JOHN L. STODDARD.

Father Coffey had been in Mingo Junction two months when this letter was written, being transferred by his Bishop to St. Agnes' Church there in November, 1904.

CHAPTER IX

THE MILLS OF MEN

IF you travel by rail eastward out of Denison, Ohio, you will observe the grade steadily rising toward the hills along the Ohio River. If your journey is by night, then after the last upward plunge of the train, you sweep around a quick, dipping curve, out of the dark rocky gaps and the black woods on either hand, into what at first glance looks like a night scene in fairy land.

Thousands of lights, like fireflies, pick out the inky blackness. Along both sides of the river, far as the eye can reach, the scene is that of a vast summer garden, hung with Japanese lanterns. Here and there, great bursts of luminous smoke and vapor, copper-colored and pink and purplish white, rise into the air like huge flowered fireworks. A stranger to this locality might suppose it to be a spacious pleasure park until as he looked he would see a huge serpent of fire uncoil from some hidden nest and fling himself venomously up into the night,

stabbing at the darkness with swift tongues of flame. And in the glare that lit up the scene for a moment, he could see that it was very far from being a garden of pleasure. He has been looking at the electric lights and the furnace fires of the mills and factories of Mingo.

The Ohio Valley, meaning by that word the northeastern portion of Ohio, is probably the busiest spot on earth. From Pittsburgh down to Wheeling on both sides of the Ohio, there is one crowding succession of iron foundries, glass factories, steel mills, coal mines, tin works, potteries, oil wells. Within arm's reach all around these are the great plants for the manufacture of automobile tires and all manner of accessories. This entire system goes day and night, without intermission. It is labor on an epic scale. A bird's-eye view of the district would make Homer look about for new similes to visualize multitudes in action; and a "close-up" would very likely give Milton some further ideas for the early books of Paradise Lost and even send Dante back to retouch his Inferno.

Mingo Junction gives us as good a cross section of the Valley as any we could have. It is not as large a town as many others in the dis-

trict, numbering about five thousand persons; but it is decidedly typical of the whole region. It is built right along the Ohio. The flat land close to the river's bank is taken up, every foot of it, by mills and railroad tracks, with just enough room for a narrow and winding business street to squeeze itself in against the hills. An interurban car, connecting Steubenville and Brilliant, some four miles on either side, runs down this Main Street of Mingo, lined with grocery and clothing stores, meat and vegetable markets, restaurants, real estate offices, garages, a hotel, a postoffice, a bank.

The rest of the town scrambles on its hands and knees to the top of the steep rise. Houses dropped in on every little level spot, after such fashion that one may stand on one's front porch and look down on the roof of one's neighbor's house. Streets make themselves as they may, twisting in and out but always up. Longfellow should have seen Mingo before he wrote his "Excelsior." If there were any eagles about they would be jealous of the Mingo folk. "Going up" is the town slogan. It reminds me of the Arkansas farmer who fell out of his cornfield and broke his neck. If a Mingo man fell out of his back yard a searching party would have to go after him.

When we have said this much against Mingo (rather in its favor, as indicating the gritty, mountaineer spirit of its citizens) we have said everything that can be brought against it. For its people recall the pleasantest memories I retain after many years of travel.

Twenty years ago these people did not know one another. There was plenty of reason for that. They belonged to more than twenty different nationalities. It is the same to-day. Recently the General Manager of the Mingo Steel Works, Mr. George Wisener, gave me this official classification of the nationalities employed in his mill: Americans, 697; English, 20; Irish, 14; Scotch, 3; Serbians, 57; Bulgarians, 16; Slovaks, 255; Polish, 12; Russians, 8; Croatians, 4; Austrians, 19; Hungarians, 18; Italians, 218; Spanish, 6; Roumanian, 1; Mexican, 1; Germans, 10; Swedes, 3; Negroes, 52; Danish, 1; Greeks, 3; Macedonian, 1. Total—1419, distributed among twenty-two nationalities. It is fair to assume that the same proportions will be found throughout the district. A large percentage of these is Catholic.

Differing in language, customs, traditions, often, too, with the inherited national antipathies; shy, with the shyness of the newcomer

to strange surroundings; forced to the limit of their power to toil for the support of large families, it is not hard to see that they had at first neither the inclination nor the time to try to understand one another. It was this problem of America's melting pot that Father Coffey faced when he came to Mingo in November, 1904.

The problem came before him in an acute form, moreover. In the larger cities these nationalities spread more. They form groups, locate in distinct sections, have priests of their own separate tongues to care for the spiritual welfare of each nationality. In Mingo it was not thus. Father Coffey was the single pastor assigned to the entire field. To make every one of these people feel welcome to the Church, to the country; to bring them together understandingly; to have them pray together, work together, live their social life together; in short, to make a happy and holy family out of these scattered and often hostile units—this was the life work that Father Dan took up in Mingo. He had to assemble these disjoined pieces into the spiritual kaleidoscope and to weave them into lasting patterns of divine beauty. How well he succeeded may be judged from the tribute of one who watched

his work, who said after Father Coffey's death, "The parish of Mingo during Father Coffey's incumbency was a veritable little kingdom of love."

He knew none of the languages native to these foreigners, and beyond the dash of a phrase picked up from one or another, he never learned any of their tongues. Indeed, he did not have the time for it. When Father Coffey arrived in Mingo, he found the financial, the social and the religious problems so complicated and so pressing that anything like the leisure for language learning was out of the question. To most men this would have been a discouraging handicap, but it never even bothered Father Coffey.

"How did you get to handle these people in the beginning without knowing how to talk to them?" I asked him on one occasion.

"I went around and made nice faces at them," he answered. "When they saw I liked them, they wanted to talk to me, and they had to learn English to do it. Now we splash along in fine style. Of course, from the very start I always had priests to come to St. Agnes' and hear the confessions of all who could not go in English."

That was the cue to all Father Coffey's suc-

cess with his people—he "liked" them. More than that, he loved them and they knew it. As Father Thomas Powers finely says in his memorial booklet:

"When there is question of duty and humanity the priest, like the sunbeam, is a native of every sky; and so, Father Coffey was to the foreigner, of whom there were many in his congregation, a father and a friend. He did not learn their language, it is true, but he came closer to their hearts by studying their needs and speaking to them in the universal language of kindly helpfulness."

Of course the American portion of St. Agnes' parish was hand in hand with Father Coffey from the start; but he was not satisfied with this. He must have the whole congregation, down to the last man, woman and child clasping hands all around. He followed the practical idea of proving to these people that he wanted them by efficiently helping them in their work.

A fortunate incident occurred at this time which opened the way to him. One day there was handed in to Mr. Wisener, in his office in the mills, a letter, complaining of a shortage in pay. It was brought by an Italian, who could not explain himself well in English.

The letter was so well written, both as to composition and penmanship, that it attracted the attention of Mr. Wisener.

"Who wrote this letter?" he inquired.

"The little daughter in the boarding house where I stay," was the answer.

"I can hardly believe it," said Mr. Wisener. After settling the complaint satisfactorily, he said, "Have that little girl sent to the office."

In a short time Mary, twelve years of age, appeared and was shown into the office.

"Did you write this, Mary?" asked the manager, showing her the letter.

"Yes, sir," said Mary.

"Let me see how you do it," said the manager and he gave her a pen and some paper. "Copy this for me, please."

Mary took the pen and made a beautiful copy of the lines Mr. Wisener had placed before her.

"What school do you go to, Mary?" asked he.

"I go to St. Agnes' School, sir," replied Mary.

"Do the Sisters teach you this?"

"Yes, sir," said Mary. "They teach me everything."

"You are going to a good school, Mary,"

said Mr. Wisener, and he dismissed her with a present of a half dollar.

This incident reached Father Coffey. With the sure instinct that was his, he saw at once that he had a future friend in the head of the steel works, a man who saw beyond the mill exits and realized that there was more in any man than mere labor, and that labor problems will never be settled by way of the pocket but by way of the heart. Father Dan was not strong for "future" friends, however. He insisted on having them in the present tense and keeping them there. He called on Mr. Wisener and invited him to visit the school, naming a date when there was to be a distribution of prizes and a little entertainment.

"I won't ask you to make a speech, Mr. Wisener," said Father Coffey, "but if you would like to donate any prizes to the children, I shall see that they are given out with my own hands."

Both invitations were accepted. Mr. Wisener sent to the rectory a check for twenty-five dollars to be turned into twenty-five prizes for the children "who had done the best work." On the day appointed he was there among the guests of the school. A pretty entertainment was given and the distribution of the prizes be-

gan. As it proceeded, Mr. Wisener noted that they went beyond twenty-five and up to thirty-five. At the intermission he called Father Coffey and said:

"There were more than twenty-five prizes, weren't there?"

"Yes, Mr. Wisener," said Father Coffey, entirely unabashed, "but there is so much 'best' work in St. Agnes' School that I had to put in ten dollars of my own for extra prizes."

"Oh, no, that won't do at all," said Mr. Wisener, "this is my day at the school and it's all the prizes or none."

"Well, since you insist," said Father Coffey, with mock reluctance, "I shall withdraw my ten—with regret." And he took a check for another ten dollars. Mr. Wisener was lured into a speech besides.

This was the beginning of an *entente cordiale* between the head of St. Agnes' parish and the head of the steel works, which lasts to the present hour. The results of genuine co-operation are evident. Socialism never got the least foothold in Mingo. The propagandists made headway in other districts near by; they tried Mingo time and again but they flitted out as fast as they flitted in. Father Coffey watched his people with affectionate

care, instructed them in groups, knew personally every individual in his parish and thus anticipated every danger that threatened them. He was at the fountain head of every movement in the parish. During the eleven years of his pastorate there was not a single strike, and there has been none since.

One of the methods used by the Socialists to breed discontent was an attempted spread of the *Menace* through the works. The sheet was mailed to the men in their homes, put into the pockets of their working coats, left about in corners where they could be picked up—all this secretly and unknown to the authorities at the mill. Father Coffey found it out and immediately went to them with a complaint. His people were being attacked for their religion and the edge of discontent was splitting the men apart.

An order was at once given to have this propaganda stopped and the announcement was made that the first person discovered distributing the *Menace* would be discharged permanently. The trouble ended in the mill.

But Father Coffey did not stop there. It was known that the mailing of the *Menace* had been done in a nearby town. He set himself to discover who was responsible for this.

One day he was hurrying to catch a car from this town for home. His arms were filled with bundles—he seldom returned home without bundles, picked up, as we shall see, everywhere—as he was met by a friend who stopped him and said:

"Father Coffey, I have found out the man who has been mailing that *Menace*."

"Who is he?" asked Father Dan.

The surprising answer came with the name of a man whom Father Coffey had done business with for years, who had often expressed a warm admiration for him.

"Is that so?" said he. He walked into a store before him, put down the bundles on the counter, said, "Please watch these for me," and walked rapidly down the street to the business place of the man whose name had been given him.

"Is Mr. Blank here?" he asked, so as to be heard plainly in the store.

Mr. Blank was in his office. He came out and seeing Father Coffey, came forward effusively, holding out his hand.

"Father Coffey!" he said. "I am delighted to see you. How are you?"

"Quite well," said Father Coffey. "But I won't shake hands with you now. I have just

been told, Mr. Blank, that you are the chief distributor of the *Menace* in this town and in our town of Mingo. I don't like to think this of you. But let me tell you something. I'm trying to raise funds to build a little Catholic church for my poor people and 'A. P. A.' money looks just as good to me as any other kind. That's all I have to say to you at present." Turning on his heel he walked rapidly out of the store.

Two days later he received a substantial check from Mr. Blank to be applied to the church.

"We'll call this the slush fund," he said, "but we'll make even the devil help to build the Catholic church."

Times there were, too, when the men themselves were to blame for their troubles. Nearly always the cause was drink. Father Coffey was not opposed to the workingman having his glass of beer; but he came down heavily on the whiskey drinker and the sot. If he discovered a man intoxicated he would riddle him with so fierce a fire of sarcastic scorn that he often stung him sober.

"Lo, Father Coffey!" mumbled a maudlin fellow to him one day in the street, "gladda see ya!"

"Don't grunt at me," said Father Coffey, stepping back from him. "I'm no hog. Get back to the trough you just left and nose in there with the other hogs. *They'll* be glad to see you." He left the man standing there bewildered, already half sobered by the shots that went through him.

In his sermons, he withered the "saloon hounds," as he termed the drunkards, in phraseology that reduced them to a cinder. "Big kangaroos, with nothing but a long neck with a pin head on top of it, leaping from their hind legs for the bar and kicking their families in the face!"

He knew, however, that words alone would never stop them effectively. He must cut in at the source. He wasted no time in trying to influence the type of saloon keeper who poured the drink into his men. These he regarded as past human feeling. He went to the general manager of the mills.

At a conference, it was agreed between them that any man of his parish who neglected his work through drink would be laid off indefinitely and could not return to work there until he had seen Father Coffey and brought a signed pledge to abstain from drink. The plan worked perfectly. Gradually the drink

evil declined and finally disappeared altogether. The men learned to control themselves without any prohibition law.

It was not pleasant for them to have to face Father Coffey on second infractions of the pledge, and sometimes they attempted strategy to avoid him. One day after a second drinking spree, a man came into the mill and asked for his job again. The manager looked him over, talked to him a little and finally asked:

"Where is your pledge?"

"Here it is," said the man, and passed a signed document across the desk. The manager looked at it.

"That won't go here," said he. "No pledges but those signed by Father Coffey will be taken in this mill."

The man left, returned after an hour and was reinstated. He never needed another pledge. "That tongue lashing I got from Father Coffey," he said, "will do me for the rest of my life."

CHAPTER X

SPREADING SAIL

WE have dwelt upon Father Coffey's relations with the heads of the mills in Mingo, because a large percentage of his parish worked there, and it was to the interest of every one to establish cordial and lasting business relations from the start.

The mill, however, by no means measured the circumference of his circle of influence. In a very short time, Father Coffey was intimately known by all the business men of Mingo and of Steubenville as well. His idea was that every one should know exactly what a Catholic priest was like, and just what the Catholic Church stood for in her work; so he went up close to every one and in a moment each one saw he was coming as a friend.

"I'm a salesman for the Catholic Church," he used to say, "and I have to be out on the road."

And in the language of the salesmen, he was master of the perfect "approach." It took no

formal introduction to put him in touch with any one. In the easiest, most natural manner possible he would move down the street, missing not a person as he went, from the smallest child to the distinguished citizen, with a smile of recognition, or a friendly nod, or a wave of the hand; or, if words were spoken, with just the word that fitted.

He would drop into a store and in a minute would have the manager engaged in delighted conversation, not forgetting a happy remark to the assistants and a sparkle of wit for the customers. Even on his first visit to a place, an observer would suppose from his manner that he had known the people all his life. Not a hint of the spectacular about all this, not the suggestion of patronizing or posing. On the other hand, not the shadow of cringing—none of the crude and frothy effusiveness of the professional friend-maker. Everything was as simple and as spontaneous as the song of a bird, and as enjoyable. It was the perfection of the *"Cor ad cor loquitur,"* the acme of affability. "I never saw a man like him," was the serious judgment of an official who had met men in every walk of life.

It is not surprising that he had the entrée everywhere. In a very short while he grew to

be the most trusted man in Mingo. On a recent visit to the town, I met many of its business men of varying creeds and characters. We talked of Father Coffey and though he had been dead four years, he was still so close to them, so vividly remembered, that it seemed as if he were still in their midst and might be expected to drop in on our conversation at any moment.

While he lived, there was not a civic movement in the town with which he was not identified. The citizens depended upon having his advice and help. At the same time he never forgot that the most beneficial movement in Mingo was the work of the Catholic Church. As he gave the best he had to the town, he expected the men of the town to give his church more than mere sympathy.

As soon as he came to Mingo, he saw that he must get ready to build. He had a little church, a school, a house, all built of wood and already drooping with age. The Sisters' house, too, was not what he would like them to have; and his congregation, though willing, was poor. They were beginning their own homes and could not carry a building proposition of that size.

Accordingly, after he was settled in the

town, he began to collect funds for the church. His parish responded generously, but he did not limit himself to the Catholics alone. Non-Catholics should contribute also, to his way of thinking.

"Aren't they getting the benefit of the power of the Catholic Church among them?" he said. "Why, we're helping them and they ought to pay for it."

One of his familiar friends was Mr. D. J. Sinclair, since dead, then a prominent banker and mill owner in Steubenville. Father Coffey walked into his bank one morning.

"Good morning, Father," said Mr. Sinclair.

"Good morning, Mr. Sinclair. I've come to take some money out of your bank; and it isn't going to be from my deposit, but from yours."

"How is that?" asked Mr. Sinclair.

"Well," continued Father Coffey, with finished repose of manner, "everybody knows that you are interested in furthering every movement for the good of Steubenville and its environs. Now I am pushing ahead the biggest and absolutely the best movement ever started in this region and you simply have to be in on it."

"What is the movement?" inquired Mr. Sin-

clair, much surprised that he hadn't heard of it before.

"It's the Catholic Church, which I represent in Mingo and which is working hard day and night to make the men of this section better men, better workers and better citizens. I need money for a new school and church to keep this movement vital; and you're not going to stand one side and see me want it."

Mr. Sinclair wrote a check for five hundred dollars and gave it to Father Coffey.

"Thank you very much," said he, as he carefully put it away. "But remember, D. J., this is only the beginning. You'll be dying to give me more after a while and I'll be back to get it."

Some time after, the evangelist, Billy Sunday, came to Steubenville and held a revival. When the subscriptions were published, Father Coffey noted that Mr. Sinclair had given five hundred dollars. The next day the latter happened to look out of his office window and saw Father Coffey standing in front of the bank in a most dejected attitude, with a countenance the picture of woe, looking in at the window at intervals, but not making any attempt to enter. Mr. Sinclair was mystified.

He went out to Father Coffey and invited him in. He did so and seated himself funereally.

"What has happened, Father? Has anybody died?"

"Yes," said Father Coffey. "My hopes are dead. Here is this Billy Sunday coming to town and preaching out of a false bible six weeks. He gets five hundred dollars for it from one of my best friends. I work around here for six years, teaching out of the true Bible and nobody offers me a cent."

He got another check the equal of Billy Sunday's.

"Now, I feel revived," he said as he folded the check. "If you keep on this way, D. J., do you know what I may do? I may have a stained glass medallion made with your picture in it and put it up over the door of my church; and I'm thinking that's as close to heaven as a lot of you Presbyterians will ever get."

The inevitable bazaar and festival was part of the machinery he employed. His congregation responded generously—mill workers are proverbially generous—but Father refused to allow them to do it all. He went personally to his "money friends" and invited them to be present.

"And be sure to come well heeled," he told them. "We'll get all the heels and you'll be lucky to get off with your soul."

"We came to be fleeced," said one of Father Coffey's old friends. "And you can believe we were fleeced artistically. If I hid a dime in my shoe, I think he would have got it; but we never had so much fun for the money."

As they were leaving, Father Coffey would anxiously inquire if they had car fare. "I'll *lend* you a nickel," he would say with an air of generosity.

He had his own way, too, of keeping down repair bills. If a pump were broken, or a furnace out of order, he sent a note to the mill, asking Mr. Wisener to have a man "drop in to look at it." The man came over and fixed it.

"How much will that be?" he asked the man.

"I don't know," was the answer.

"Then tell Mr. Wisener to send the bill," said Father Coffey. Of course, the bill never came.

One day during the dinner hour at the mill, a dynamite explosion occurred that shook up the neighborhood somewhat. Before two o'clock the mill office received a bill from Father Coffey for broken glass and plaster

in the school. "I always aim to be business-like in these little matters," he added.

The bundles he came home with from his walks were very often presents he received from the merchants of Mingo and Steubenville. He had his unique way of getting them. He "took them" he used to say. His usual way, when he needed anything, was to wander into a store, looking sadly out of pocket (as indeed he was) and to gaze longingly at the object he was after.

"Anything you would like, Father?"

"Yes," he would reply. "That!" pointing at the article with a meaning that it never could be his.

"Take it," was the invariable reply. "It's yours."

"Well, if you insist," Father Coffey would say deprecatingly, "then wrap it up for me."

As a matter of fact, any of the stores would give him anything they thought he needed even before he expressed a wish for it. They so much enjoyed his "approach," however, that they liked to wait until he made it; and he never made it twice in the same way.

Mr. Sulzbacher, a general merchant in Steubenville, told Father Coffey one Christmas time to select anything in the store he wished

for a Christmas gift. Nothing loathe, Father Coffey fastened his eyes on a cut glass water set, which in due time was on display in his "den" at Mingo. Some days later he was making his rounds of the same store when he noticed a combination cane and umbrella. He brought it to Mr. Sulzbacher.

"Sulz," he said, "this is what you should have given me for Christmas. I'll take it for New Year's."

"Take it," said Mr. Sulzbacher. "And a Happy New Year with it."

The telephone was an ally of his in the same cause and his use of it was most artistic. On the eve of a great Feast Day, the Sister in charge of the altar decoration sent up word to Father Coffey that more flowers would be needed to have things at their best, and that roses would be preferred. Father Coffey told the messenger to say to Sister that the roses would be there in a few minutes.

He turned to the 'phone and called a number.

"Hello, that you, Bert? Father Coffey speaking—I wish to thank you for those beautiful roses you sent me. Such gorgeous color and so large!—What, didn't you see them? Why I can smell them from here, a dozen of

them, American Beauties—they're on the way, you say? Thank you, Bert, you're a lovely man. Good-by."

He had been talking with the florist. The flowers were at the house immediately.

His library had the best and the latest books sent him by the bookstores. Nothing, thought these people, was too good for Father Coffey.

To hear him talk about "money," a stranger would imagine that his soul was set upon gold. Those who knew him understood well that every move he made was directed to his church and to his poor. He was most exact in his official accounts and would exercise his genius to help the church. In his personal accounts, he was the very opposite. He kept no record of what was due himself. It was too much bother, he said, to worry over such things.

He had enough money collected to begin his building when the war broke out. He died before the war was over, but he left to his successor a nucleus which will soon develop into the realization of his dream. As to his own fortune, his death disclosed that the only earthly possessions which were his to bequeath, were his books and thirty-six dollars in money.

CHAPTER XI

HE HAD COMPASSION

THE grace of giving, which we noted in Father Coffey's boyhood, grew with his growth. The words of scripture, "He had compassion on the multitude," had a special attraction for him. If we followed those bundles he used to bring home from the stores we should find nearly all of them ultimately in the hands of the poor. He was not content to work singly in this field. He saw it was impossible for him to cover the ground alone. He thought of things always on a large scale and in the matter of helping the poor, his idea was to reach them all, regardless of race or belief.

One of his earliest perceptions was the need of a hospital for the workers of the vicinity. Dr. Strayer, the surgeon of the steel plant, had the same idea and he came to his friend, Father Coffey, to confer with him, confident of a sympathetic hearing, and knowing that once he had enlisted Father Coffey in the work, a

sure and rapid way of solving the difficulty would be found. The first discussion of the matter took place on the steps of St. Agnes' Church. Father Coffey was enthusiastic. They worked out a plan together. Ready to answer detailed questions, they approached Mr. Wisener. He saw the necessity and practicability of the plan and promised his efficient coöperation. Father Powers, the pastor of St. Peter's Church in Steubenville, and other business men of that town were likewise interested. A committee was formed to organize the people of both Mingo and Steubenville to assist in securing funds. They responded quickly and under the capable direction of Mr. Wisener, the work was pushed forward. The original idea contemplated a hospital for the Mingo mills. Father Coffey suggested a larger building to be located in Steubenville, to care for the people of both cities. This was adopted. To-day the handsome Ohio Valley Hospital in Steubenville stands as a witness to Father Coffey's love for the suffering.

In past years, before the Ohio River was dammed, annual floods threatened the dwellers along the banks. Many times it was more than a threat. In 1913 a sudden and disastrous flood rushed in over the river bottoms

at Mingo and swept everything before it. Houses with all their contents, furniture, stoves, bedding, were whirled away within an hour and spun down the river, the people barely escaping with their lives. A hundred families were left huddled along the hills, entirely destitute of clothing and food.

The town of Mingo at once came to their rescue. A relief committee was formed, with Father Coffey one of its members, and donations of money and of household goods for immediate use were called for. Help came from all sides. Bread, meat, groceries, fuel, stoves, kitchen ware, clothes, furniture, beds, all the essentials of home, to say nothing of a large sum of money, were contributed in a day by the people and the merchants. The different articles were sorted and each lot assembled, under supervision, in accessible parts of the town where the destitute could readily get them.

On the same day the committee held a final meeting to decide how they should identify those deserving help, thus to prevent fraud in the distribution. As soon as the purpose of the meeting had been announced, a lady rose and addressed the house.

She was pleased, she said, to meet such an

efficient group of men. She had traveled much and had not been long in Mingo; but she must confess that in all her experience she had not witnessed anywhere more marvelous work for the uplift of humanity than the men of Mingo had accomplished in so short a time.

"But," she continued, assuming the rôle of patron and prophetess, "our real work is ahead of us, namely in the distribution of the goods. Statistics prove that the great leakage in all charitable movements, the one rift in the lute, comes from slovenly methods in apportioning the intake. Really to identify the deserving is to-day a problem worthy of the most discerning intelligence."

The men sat stupefied. For most of them it was the first time they had encountered an uplifter and her patois was totally unintelligible to them. They looked at her with their fingers in their mouths, metaphorically speaking.

"Gentlemen," continued the prophetess, "I hold in my hand a paper containing the results of a scrutinizing research made through the town to-day, and I shall direct your attention to the following particulars which will control us in meting out our aid to the genuinely worthy. I shall read it to you:

"Thomas Williams—earns $20 a week. Spends part of that for drink. He should receive no help.

"Samuel Brown—while not able to work, has two boys who bring in $25 weekly.

"David Whipple—owns a market garden and a small farm.

"Arthur Landers—catches fish in the river and sells them. He may be classed as a merchant.

"Henry Johnson—makes a good salary working on the railroad and has a daughter at work also.

"These five I have discovered to be undeserving of help. If any gentleman here has more to add to this list, it will simplify our process of elimination and enable us to focus our attention upon the worthy."

Nobody stirred. The reaction was *nil.*

Father Coffey waited in silence to see what the others would say. They said nothing. They were back in the stone age. "I couldn't quite get it all," said one of them afterwards. "But I knew some one was throwing a marlinspike into the machinery." Father Coffey arose. He had not much patience with the

professional uplifters. As a class, they did not seem genuine to him.

"Lady," he said, "and gentlemen: I do not wish to make a long speech, because we haven't the time now for anything but work. However, I am certain that I voice the opinion of every man here when I express our appreciation of the incomprehensibility of the beauty of the instruction our friend has vouchsafed us.

"Especially illuminating are the lady's remarks upon statistics as compared to loot. It recalls to our minds, I am sure, the saying of Thucydides, that 'the only thing loot needs to succeed is to have itself backed up by statistics.' And in the present work, if we wish to avoid the rift in the loot, we shall likewise have to steer clear of statistics.

"As to the five names given, all I have to say is that if Arthur Landers catches fish, he has no stove to cook them on. If David Whipple owns a market garden, he can't put his head under water and pull up radishes with his teeth. If Thomas Williams drinks, his wife and children must eat. As for the others, they may be making money, but if any of us found a millionaire starving in the desert, we wouldn't tell him to take out his bank book and eat it.

"To conclude, I move that we start in this very hour to make the distribution, each of us using his best judgment according to the work assigned to him. All in favor of the motion will please say 'Aye.' "

A resounding chorus of male voices sang out "Aye." The distribution began within the hour.

All the clothing had been entrusted to Father Coffey. It made a mountainous pile in the school hall. Himself, with some trusty parish assistants, attended personally to all the work.

On the second day of the distribution, after all who had come had been fitted out, a negro woman wandered into the hall and began to look about. Father Coffey went over to meet her.

"Is there anything I can do for you, madam?" he inquired.

Madame paused. "Is you Preacher Coffey?" she asked.

"Yes, madam," said Father Coffey.

"Well, Ah'se suah glad to heah it. Dey tells me you all gives the people jes' what dey want."

"Yes, anything in the way of clothes," said

Father Coffey. "Do you live along the river?"

"Ah'se done *did* live dere," said madame. "But dat ribber done washed mah house out clean."

"Then you'll want some kitchen things," said Father Coffey. "I can tell you where to get a stove and some chairs and a table."

"Ah doan want no stoves, an' no chaiahs, an' no tables."

"Were the beds carried out of your house, too?" asked Father Coffey.

"Yeah, dey was. Eberyting went out, 'cept de house. But Ah doan want any of dem tings now. Ah'se tell you all whut Ah do want—" lowering her voice to a stage whisper and rolling her eyes around the hall, "Ah want a set of furs."

"A set of furs!" gasped Father Coffey.

"Yeah, a set of furs, like de grand ladies wears. Ah ain't neber had none, and Ah want 'em now."

Father Coffey, thoroughly alive to the humor of the situation, dug into the mountain and came out at last with a fur coat. She put it on at once.

He plunged into the mass again and excavated a fur hat. Madame took off her old hat

and jammed the fur one on. It *had* to fit.

At the third attempt Father Coffey came up with a heavy fur muff.

"I hope this will fit you, lady," he said.

She pushed her hands into it and began marching around the hall.

"Ah'se a queen!" she exclaimed in ecstasy.

It was a warm day in April but royalty never bothers with the weather. She steamed down the hill, a rapturous ball of fur, calling out all the way, "Ah'se a queen! Ah'se a queen!"

With the view of continuing and fostering this spirit of coöperation in Mingo, Father Coffey gave an annual dinner at his residence to which he invited the head men of the mills and his business friends in the vicinity.

"How we used to look forward to those dinners!" said one. "The welcome we received and the easy way in which we got to feel at home there. No preliminary melting away of thin ice. We never thought, many of us, that we would arrive at the point where we would be happy to be in a priest's house.

"Then the dinner! The banter and the wit and laughter of it all, with Father Coffey leading the way. It made me feel twenty years younger. We were all like a bunch of boys.

"After dinner a smoke in Father's 'den.' Here we got down to business. Our discussions invariably went into the subjects nearest Father Coffey's heart. How we could improve things and men in our town; defects that ought to be attended to; ways and means of helping the workingman and his family and the poor. Father didn't forget his church, either.

"We left his house better men and more anxious than ever to do our part."

On other occasions he would invite one or other of the men to dine with him, to talk over special cases in detail.

In this busy life of his, it was not to be expected that Father Coffey could always escape criticism. Wherever a strong light is focused upon a central figure, there will always be some croaking from the outlying shadows. The following is a copy of a letter which Father Coffey doubtless sent, and of which we have no further details. Internal evidence, however, indicates that it is an answer to somebody, who was indulging in patronizing worry over Father Coffey's spiritual welfare. We give Father Coffey's reply:

December 5, ——

Dear Sir:

I am in receipt of a letter from you, containing a category of questions, which has given me no little surprise and vexation.

The matter about which you write you seem to be better informed on than I. You are particularly well informed as to date, persons participating and program. This information you seek from me, yet graciously vouchsafe it yourself. The only question you did not ask was whether I had attended the affair. No doubt you diligently informed yourself upon this; hence the reason for not adding it to your category above mentioned.

I cannot recall any action of mine that has jeopardized my standing as a priest, for I feel I know when to judge between my official duties and my privileges. This latter I know would require consultation and permission of my superiors. To these would I have recourse had I occasion to do so, and to these would I have to answer—and to these *only*—were I rash enough to do anything which might incur their censure.

I would likewise remind you that my zeal for Catholic principles and discipline, though it

may not be spectacular, is nevertheless sincere. Since, therefore, you are better informed on the subject about which you write than I am, I must tell you that I see no reason for further correspondence between us on the matter.

D. A. COFFEY.

Father Coffey's charity was by no means restricted to community emergencies. He was suspicious of what are nowadays styled "movements," or "drives."

"The organized charity, scrimped and iced," found him somewhat cold. He disliked its air of condescension, its too frequent advertising of self. He believed, and taught his people, that the best form of charity is exercised by the individual in the little circle where God has placed him. "Watch that spot," he used to say, "and you'll find plenty to do without any parading."

He gave constant example of his teaching, No case of need in his parish ever went unattended; and he did not wait until the trouble was brought to him. He was aggressive in discovering the wants of others. Particularly was this true with the children. He observed each child in the school and noted when any seemed to need assistance.

"Many a time," writes one of the Sisters who taught in St. Agnes' School, "he would order shoes and stockings, in fact clothes of all kinds, sent to the Sisters' house, with directions to have the needy fitted out. This was to be done quietly so that the others would not find it out. It was evident to me why he was so poor himself.

"I remember too," continues the Sister, "his goodness to the children of the mining camp district. This was a shifting district with the people constantly moving in and out, and besides so distant and isolated a place, that even with the cars to help, it was not easy to reach. Father watched the children there and saw that they were prepared for the Sacraments.

"Once a class of twelve of these children were instructed for their First Communion at our school. Father, at his own expense, paid their way in and out. Before the great day he observed that three of them would not be able to dress for the occasion as neatly as they would like to. He fitted out these three with suits and shoes. On their Communion day the class had dinner in town, which Father paid for. Then the pastor, holding two grinning lads by the hands, others holding on to

his coat, the rest at his heels, and all chattering together, made their way in a crowd to the movies.

"In the evening, amid calls of 'Good-by, Fader,' and 'We had a good time, Fader,' they were placed on the street car for home. It was hard to tell who had enjoyed the day most, the priest or the children."

Tramps had his house marked. He was a "sure thing" for them. He never gave them much money, as they failed to fool him into believing their stories of a cruel world; but he would never take the chance, as he said, of adding the last straw to their burden. "Besides," he said, "they earn the little they get in the scolding I give them."

The "scolding" was a straight talk to them to get to work and take care of themselves. Some of them he started again on the good road by getting them work in the mills.

Often in conversation he would remark that he had to get a pair of shoes, as he had only one pair.

"Why, where are your shoes? You had two pairs last week," said one who had seen them.

"Oh, there was a poor fellow over at the house the other day," said Father Coffey, "and his shoes looked so bad, I gave him mine."

When the children presented him with a Christmas gift in money, he would immediately plan to return it in some way for their good.

He noted what one might call little needs in the children, things that inexperienced parents overlooked. A child showed by his actions in class that he was shortsighted. Father Coffey would attend to him when the parents could not afford it.

Jimmie was a tall gangling young lad, just at the awkward age, and very nearsighted. Father Coffey met him one day and said:

"Let's take a ride, Jimmie. I want you to help me."

"All right, Father," said Jimmie.

They boarded a car and rode to Steubenville, Jimmie wondering what was in the air. Alighting, they went straight to the oculist, Jimmie shuffling along after Father Coffey's fast walk, and elbowing a lane among the passengers along the street.

"I want this boy's eyes examined," said Father Coffey to the oculist. "If you can, have the glasses done to-day."

The examination was made. The oculist arranged with the optician to have the glasses done that afternoon.

Father Coffey and Jimmie met at the appointed time at the optician's. There Jimmie put on his first pair of glasses. The new adjustment of his vision bewildered him and he stared around at the people in the store like an owl out of a tree.

Father Coffey looked up at six-foot Jimmie, in his quizzical way, and then in a serious and business-like tone, said:

"Come, Secretary," and with the dignity of a drum major, marched out of the store with Jimmie tumbling along after him.

Mr. Klein, a clothing merchant of Mingo, saw Father Coffey coming into his store on a very cold winter morning. Looking a second time, he saw a tiny lad alongside of Father. He came over to them.

"Mr. Klein, I just picked this little fellow up along the street. Dress him up, or he'll freeze to death. He needs everything."

The boy had on only a ragged pair of trousers; he was barefooted, hatless and naked from the waist up except for a thin piece of a shawl he had twisted about him.

"Sure, we'll fix him up," said Mr. Klein, getting busy at once.

"What is his name?"

"I didn't have time to find out his name nor

where he comes from," answered Father Coffey. "I just dragged him in here before he'd perish. But we'll have it now. What is your name, son?"

He took down the boy's name and his address. Mr. Klein fitted him out from top to toe and the lad smiled.

"Now," said Father Coffey, "we'll go out and put something inside that frozen stomach, and then I'll bet you'll laugh. What is the bill, Mr. Klein?"

"I'll take care of the bill, Father," said Mr. Klein.

"Thank you, Mr. Klein. Now" (to the boy), "we'll go out and get that laugh that's coming to us."

And the two had breakfast together.

"I'll never forget Father Coffey," said Mr. Klein, after telling me this story. "When my mother died and I was called away suddenly to New York, the first thing to console me there, was a telegram of sympathy from Father. I didn't have time to tell any one why I was going, but Father Coffey saw the store closed the next day and found that my mother had died; and he went right away and wrote words that helped me."

When Father Coffey died, Mr. Klein,

though of the Jewish faith, sent an offering for Masses for the repose of his friend's soul.

I always like to think of Father Coffey as he was in those golden days of his ministry. The first impression I had of him was that of dignity, and this impression remained through the intimacy of after years of friendship. It was, I think, the general impression. A dear invalid lady, who knew him well, but who had not seen him for years, speaking of him a short time back, said in her soft whisper, "Wasn't he dignified!" The dedicatory page of Father Powers' booklet, *In Memoriam,* describes him as a man respected and loved by all who knew him. Respect was the earliest feeling Father Coffey inspired.

His appearance conveyed this sense at once. He was tall, just under six feet, and very erect in bearing; not the least stiff, however, nor military in carriage. On the contrary, his every movement was a combination of flexible grace and easy alertness. He was rapid in his walk, in his actions, but with no suggestion of hurry. A quiet, unstudied accuracy, a "deliberate speed, majestic instancy" pervaded all he did and revealed that thought was well in advance of action and that he knew exactly what he was about. Though he

created in every one about him an atmosphere of contentment and repose, yet the memory of him is not of one at rest, but of one eagerly pressing forward. His soul had caught the quenchless fire from Him who "went about doing good."

CHAPTER XII

A PORTRAIT AND A WALK

ALMOST simultaneously with his strength appeared his gentleness. This was not revealed as a passive quality, but as an active, even an aggressive, adaptability. What we termed his "approach," his ability to judge each character swiftly and to make just the proper advance to it, was strikingly in evidence at all times. If Father Coffey met twenty-five strangers in succession, he could say the fitting word to each of them, with no two remarks alike, and the chances are that a dozen of these remarks would be witty and all of them brotherly. He never offended through tactlessness. He never cut unless he had to. One of his parishioners unconsciously voiced this judgment of him in a group of ladies. After some pleasant banter between herself and the pastor, in which a good laugh finally turned upon her, she said:

"Oh, no one ever minds what Father Coffey

says." She meant to imply that she enjoyed the laugh as much as any of the others.

The secret of his perfect balance and his gentleness was that he showed respect for everyone as a good father would for his children, the children of God.

His voice was the perfect mate to his manner. Decision was the first note of it, but instantly again one felt it permeated with intelligent sympathy. He never gushed. He spoke rapidly, but his words came "trippingly on the tongue," with such clear enunciation that every syllable was caught without effort, and every shade of humor or feeling rose easily to the surface. There was color in his speech. He never spoke loudly, not even in the church, but suited the tone to the idea, substituting intensity for volume of sound when desiring to send home a thought. Hamlet's address to the players would be superfluous for Father Coffey. In his sermons, each one of the congregation felt that he was being talked to individually. He had no sympathy for the "lion in the pulpit" style of preaching.

"Whenever I am tempted to shout in a sermon," he said, "I think of the Scripture words, 'The devil goeth about as a roaring lion.' That stops me."

He was convincing, but neither resonant nor domineering; persuasive, but neither oily nor sentimental. His voice held the intimate note of conversation between friends. His language was fluent, but apt, never inflated by phraseology nor banked with flowers. There was no marking time in his sermons, nor countermarching. He went forward constantly.

I find it difficult to describe his countenance. His face was full, not fat, and with a touch of the florid; his hair was dark, his forehead high, looking more so in his latter years of advancing baldness. It was not a countenance from which one would anticipate unusual power of expression; yet this is the very reason that makes it difficult to fix his countenance in a portrait. I have never seen a picture of him of which I could say, "*That* is Father Coffey," He must have been the despair of the photographers and I imagine he would bewilder even a painter.

Because the thoughts of his constantly active mind rose to his countenance as the changing reflections of the sky reveal themselves in clear waters, and with a similar dissolving quietude; not the sudden and startling changes of the nervous temperament, perturbing the observer, but a childlike openness of soul shone

out with the sure serenity that betokened as well the dignified inner control of the man. Thompson's lines

> Artless as the air
> And candid as the skies,

perhaps describe Father Coffey's countenance best. And, admittedly, it is not easy to put the air and the skies upon canvas.

His mouth was rather small, but showing decision, the lips even and well together, without any hint of sullenness or acidity; his dark blue eyes were lively and penetrating, but steady and unsuspicious. He was a little nearsighted and when he wore his glasses, one of his mannerisms (he was singularly free from these) was a humorous pushing back of his *pince-nez* upon his nose which seemed to be restive under the pressure.

"This nose doesn't take well to the saddle," he used to say.

Finally he would lay the glasses aside and would appear happier.

If he were indignant or angry, a fierce light would come into his eyes as he stood straight and perfectly silent. Almost at once, however, the internal check to his anger would begin to show in the mingled expression of

kindness and of humor that came up from their depths, as though he were saying within himself, "This is funny as well as serious and we'll find the remedy for the blunder anyway." His anger passed off like a summer storm and his actions toward the person who had aroused it were as natural as though nothing had happened. He was very slow in attributing sinister motives to others. The only permanent resentment he held was for double dealing and hypocrisy.

Father Coffey seldom laughed. In an atmosphere vibrating with laughter, created mostly by his own sayings, he had a bland and innocent way of looking about at the merriment he caused as though astonished and wondering what they were all laughing at. At the same time, one could feel, though not see, that he was enjoying the fun quite as much as anyone. This attitude of unaffected amazement put a rare edge upon his wit.

On the other hand, his sympathy was manifested with equal felicity. His manner, his voice, his looks, his brief but chosen words, together made an impression upon the sorrowing and the lonely that they never forgot.

I had been giving a mission in the neighborhood of Mingo and at its close dropped in

for a few days rest at St. Agnes' Rectory. In the evening of the first day, Father Coffey said:

"Come, we've been indoors too much to-day. Let us have a little walk." We strolled out into the town. We had gone hardly a hundred feet when we met a gentleman coming up the street.

"Good evening, Doctor," said Father Coffey, pausing.

The introductions finished, Father Coffey said:

"Father, Doctor —— is the rector of the —— church here." He named a denominational church. "I regret to hear, Doctor, that Mrs. —— has not been well."

"Yes, Father, I fear she is failing fast," answered the rector.

"I am sorry to hear it," said Father Coffey. "Would a change of air benefit her?"

"The doctors think so, Father, but where shall I get the means?"

"Your people perhaps would help." Dr. —— looked dubious.

"And your friends," continued Father Coffey.

Dr. —— knowing what was meant, looked gratefully and said:

"Thank you, Father. I should not be ashamed to ask you if I needed it."

"Plan it out," said Father Coffey. "And meantime I shall not forget Mrs. —— in my prayers."

We moved on. In another moment,

"Good evening, Andy," from Father Coffey. I looked up and met a handsome giant, a tremendous man of flowing muscle and athletic build, straight as a mountain pine and stately as a commanding general.

"Good evening, Father," said Andy, cheerfully but reverently.

"Andy," Father Coffey explained, "is the best worker in our mills, even if I do say it to his face." Andy laughed bashfully, but happily.

"And what's more," said Father Coffey, "he is one of the best workers in our church. Isn't he a handsome Austrian? He'd have made a fine Captain of the Black Hussars."

"Father make fun," said Andy in his growing English.

"And how is the work going, Andy?"

"Oh, the same, Father. I am just going now on my twenty-four hours. You know I fear them, Father. If anything happens to

me, it happens then. I get so tired. My hand slips—foot slips—all over with Andy."

"Now, Andy," said Father Coffey, "nothing will happen to you. Say a prayer when you start and often when you are working, and I'll say many prayers for you, too, and put your name in my Masses. You'll be safe, Andy. Good-by and God bless you."

We came to a millinery store. The door was open and several lady shoppers within. Father Coffey stepped in.

"A beauty shop!" he exclaimed. "Flowers on the hats and flowers looking at the hats!"

"Oh, Father Coffey, you're terrible!" said they, meaning he was delightful. Evidently they were ladies of his parish.

"Aren't these flowers lovely," he said. "I can almost smell them. Miss Nellie," addressing the young lady who kept the shop, "those flowers are a creation. The only thing I fear is that when the ladies bring them into church on their hats, they'll distract the congregation. Good evening, ladies!"

Down the street we go amid salutations right and left, till suddenly we stop.

"How do you do, Sam?" said Father Coffey. "Father, here's a man I want you to

meet. This is Sam ——, and he's a pagan Jew. What do you think of that! It wouldn't be so bad if he were an orthodox. But a *pagan* Jew! I think I'll make a Catholic out of him. He's too good to leave out in the cold this way." Sam was smiling all the while, unembarrassed.

"But Sam is one of my best friends, all the same," continued Father, "and he has a heart as big as himself. We're on the hospital committee together and I know Sam is doing good work. When is the next meeting, Sam?"

"Wednesday night, Father," said Sam.

"I'll be there. Good-by, Sam."

"Good-by, Father."

Now we climb up and sideways and around until we arrive at the poorest section of the town—a jumble of wretchedly built houses, impossible of repair. Sanitation, to say nothing of cleanliness, was an absent feature of the place.

"This isn't going to stay this way," said Father Coffey, as we stood together and looked about. "We have been talking over this spot at the mill and a change is on the way."

To-day this locality is in process of becoming one of the neatest spots in Mingo. Trim, well-kept homes, many of them new, are build-

ing, with all the ordinary modern improvements, nicely painted and with grassy little lawns where formerly the ash heap flourished —the slum will soon be transfigured into a thing of beauty. The steel company has taken up the question of good homes for its employes, has devised a clever and very liberal home owning plan, coöperating with its men in building their houses and in paying for them, and there will be no more comfortable homes anywhere than those of the workingmen of Mingo.

We move across the town a bit, mount the steps of a dwelling and ring the bell. The door is opened.

"Oh, Father Coffey," says a boy's hearty voice. "Come in, Father."

Father Coffey looks through to the dining room and sees the family are at supper and are beginning to rise.

"Don't get up," he calls to them. "We're coming right in to you." They do as he says and in a moment he is among them. After introductions, he says:

"We're both thirsty, and we'll enjoy a cup of tea with you."

A place is made for each of us and in another moment Father Coffey is cozily chatting with the family of father, mother and six chil-

dren, all perfectly at their ease with their pastor. He has a question for each child, with a humorous comment for each that delights everyone. After our cup of tea is finished, we leave them there pleased and happy.

By this we are nearly back at the rectory. At the corner we come upon a group of children.

"Hello, Joe! Hello, Tommy! Hello, Harry! And here's Billy. What grade are you in, Billy?"

"Jus' beginnin' de firs', Fader," says Billy.

"Did the Sisters teach you to spell anything yet?" asks Father.

"Yes, Fader, but not hard words," says Billy, cautiously.

"Well, I'll bet you can't spell 'house'," says Father. Billy looks pained. "Here," continued Father Coffey, reaching into his pocket, "I have five pennies. I'll give you one for every letter you get correctly. Now spell 'house'."

The ring of youngsters falls back to a strategic distance, leaving Billy in the center.

"House," says Billy in a far away tone, his eyes wandering to the ring. He comes back from his forage and says loudly:

"Haitch—"

"Aitch is right," says Father. "Here's one penny."

Billy grabs the penny and goes at the job again, fixing his eyes intently upon the ring.

"I—" he announces. He had missed his signals.

"Here, you fellows," said Father Coffey, turning to the ring. "No fair on that! You're telling. You can't spell 'house' yourselves. 'I' in 'house'!" he said hopelessly.

"We never told him 'I,' Fader," chorused the gang.

"Ah, yuh did too tell me 'I'," says Billy, giving away the game.

"Ah, we never!" said the ring, with deep scorn for Billy.

"Well, don't tell him anything, or you won't get any fill-me-quicks and ink."

"Fill-me-quicks" meant baker's cakes and muffins. "Ink" was his name for soft drinks.

This direful threat reduced the crowd to a suffocated silence.

"Try again, Billy," said Father Coffey. "House," saying it very carefully for him.

"O—" ventured Billy.

"That's it," said Father Coffey. "Here's another penny."

By dint of more pronouncing, he forced the

letters u, s, e, from Billy, until the youngster had the five pennies.

"See, Billy?" he said. "You can spell without anyone telling you. After that wonderful, orderly class, here's something for the crowd. Get your fill-me-quicks and ink and divide evenly. And don't leave Billy out, either. Now beat it."

We went into the house and the gang "beat it" down the hill with a whoop.

CHAPTER XIII

A PARISH OF PEACE

"DURING the eleven years of his pastorate here the spiritual progress of St. Agnes' never lagged and the most significant feature of its uninterrupted growth was the large number of reconciliations he brought about." I quote from Father Powers' memorial sketch of Father Coffey. Father Powers, as the neighboring priest in St. Peter's parish of Steubenville, and as a close and sympathetic observer of the work done in St. Agnes', had every opportunity of knowing the inner heart of the parish. The outstanding visible blessing brought to the people through the ministrations of Father Coffey was the grace of brotherly love. "Little children, love one another," was the gospel constantly preached by word and example all those years.

In a parish like St. Agnes'—"The parish of the Five Nations," Father Coffey used to call it—it was easy to anticipate misunderstandings

between individuals and more especially between groups of nationally different people, many of whom were brought up in the old country to dislike one another. From childhood they breathed a traditional atmosphere of hostility and mistrust. Political intrigue saw to it that the earliest impressions upon the waxen hearts of the young were seared in with the hot iron of hatred. Let such a child grow up with this seal stamped in and hardened upon his heart and it becomes second nature in the man. To eradicate it and to substitute God's law, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself," requires divine grace, indeed; but, under God's dispensation, requires also a faithful bearer of the torch of grace, a worthy dispenser of the word of the Spirit.

Father Coffey was the electric spark that fused these opposite and dangerous elements into one homogeneous and wholesome substance.

He acted upon the principle that people who like the same thing will ultimately like one another; and he was the "thing" they were going to like. I had an opportunity of personally observing his memorable success in this field.

Arriving in Mingo one evening for a short stay between trains, I was told that I had come

just in time for a parish outing, a boat ride on the river.

"The Five Nations are going on a moonlight picnic this evening," said Father Coffey, "and you must come along."

I had doubts of my ability to mingle at all gracefully with the "Five Nations" and felt that my awkwardness would prove a killjoy rather than a help. I pleaded train fatigue and offered to stay at home and keep house.

"No, no, by no means," said Father Coffey. "There'll be no house to keep. The whole parish will be out." So I went down to the wharf and boarded the big boat.

They were all there, as he said. The boat was crowded. A band was playing; children chattering over the sides; young folks walking mostly in twos as well as one could walk in that crowd; the older people grouped in cozy corners. The boat cast off amid cheers from land and shore and the "Five Nations" were afloat.

But they weren't the "Five Nations" at all. There was only one nation. Instead of seeing distinct parties of Americans, Hungarians, Austrians, Slovaks, Italians, Poles, Serbians, Croatians, I found, after a little looking about, that I could not begin to pick them out separately. Americans were talking familiarly

with Slovaks; Hungarians "chumming" with Italians; Poles, Serbians, Croatians laughing and joking together, everyone snugly at home with everybody else.

What was more, I was not left out of it for a moment. I had hesitated to go to the picnic, forecasting the probability of my being a specter at the feast; but once I got aboard that boat, I wasn't allowed to hesitate. I didn't have to make any advances. They made the advances. I was invited to sit down here, and called to come over there, and hailed from the upper deck and waved at from the lower deck, until I began to feel like the nominee for the Presidency.

They had brought lunches with them and I was in on the lunches—or they were in on me, as I found out afterwards. I ate Hungarian sausage laid on Slovakian cakes; I juggled Italian spaghetti between bites of Croatian cheese; I swallowed American ice-cream, and —let me speak it in a whisper—I drank Bulgarian beer. It was a fearsome performance. Being all things to all men sometimes has its aftermath. The specters at the feast came around the next day.

The old folks talked with me as though they had known me all their lives. The youngsters

asked me to play games that demanded the agility of a rabbit. Meantime the band kept swinging into one air out of another until we were well on our way. Then the dancers began. There were American quadrilles, and Irish reels, and Scotch flings, and Hungarian hops, and Slavish folk dances and all were applauded and appreciated.

Moving constantly in and out through the throngs went Father Coffey, like a humming bird, with a word here and a joke there; an inquiry of one person, a bit of news for another; paying special attention to the old people and seeing that they were comfortable and had everything they wished for. He must have walked twenty miles that night, but it was twenty miles on the road to happiness.

"Here," I found myself thinking, "is a reproduction of the early Christians. 'Every nation under heaven' and all understanding one tongue, as it were, the Pentecostal tongue of love." Any bystander could say, too, as was said of those same early Christians, "How they love one another!"

I looked out on the serene night. The boat was gurgling melodiously through the shimmering ripples. The band struck softly the *"O Sanctissima"* and a quiet came over the

crowd. The boat was slipping into her landing place. I looked up. The round moon was shining down contentedly.

"Oh, look," said one of the children. "The man in the moon is smiling at us."

"No wonder," I said.

Another thought struck me as we walked up to the house after the picnic. Over the whole boat all the conversations, the joking and the merriment, had been carried on in the English language and the entire entertainment was American in tone. Father Coffey had solved the problem of the melting pot.

One of the reasons for such a success, achieved within ten years, was the unwearied service Father Coffey gave to the parishioners. In all his time with them he took but one vacation of any extent; and he never left his parish a day without a priest. He established Sodalities, with one of the Sisters acting as Prefect for the ladies. He had a great devotion to the Blessed Sacrament and to the Sacred Heart. The first Friday was a special day in the parish. He insisted upon the children going to Holy Communion the first Friday and any child who was absent was invariably missed by the pastor and was questioned about it afterward.

The Holy Hour was never omitted on this day. One of the Sisters of St. Agnes' School writes: "Father ascribed all his success as a priest and all the blessings, spiritual and temporal, that came to the parish, to the devotion of the Holy Hour."

He had great confidence, also, in the intercession of the saints. His favorite was the saint of the poor, St. Francis of Assisi. He was often found in the evenings re-reading the life of this charming saint, and the example of St. Francis doubtless had great influence on his own life.

He took good care, however, not to ask St. Francis for money. "We'll have to leave St. Francis out of this," he used to say when there was a question of raising funds. "He won't be interested." On such occasions he went to the Blessed Virgin and to the Little Flower.

He said Mass with great devotion and after Mass he made a visit to each shrine in the little church. If his needs were very urgent, he made a novena of visits to these shrines and all the Sisters were asked to make a visit to the shrines some time during the day. Each saint then had a lamp of oil burning before his statue throughout the nine days.

Considering all the smoke that poured over

the place day and night, his church was wonderfully clean. His altar boys were well trained and always on time. They observed, too, the rule of silence in the sacristy. It was a crowded little nook, but no matter how loudly those boys had been talking and playing outside, the moment they entered that sacristy they never spoke unless in answer to some question from the priest.

"Father Coffey took a childlike delight," writes one of his friends, "in seeing the altar decorated with flowers. Sixty to eighty dollars were expended every Christmas and Easter to beautify God's earthly home. For the Holy Hour, too, he always had fresh flowers."

He was steady and regular in the Confessional and strongly urged frequent Communion. Missions were held at set intervals and for the portion of his congregation who could not grasp the English well enough, he engaged missionaries who spoke their language. During the week of the mission, he was in the highways and the byways gathering in the sinners.

His reputation as a pursuivant made this part of his work comparatively easy. Hard shells broke open at his touch and slackers, at his approach, emerged from their dugouts.

"Aw, what's the use," said one of them who had been pursued for two days. "I'm nearly dead, and he'll get me anyhow. The only way to get loose from him is to jump in the river."

One instance of his following the strayed sheep occurs to me. During a mission we had been giving in his parish, he frequently bewailed the fact that there was one man whom he could not get, who had not been near the church for years.

"And yet Bill is a good fellow," he said. "He has the loveliest children going to our school and he provides well for his family. I can't think of him missing this chance."

Mary was Bill's little daughter. Father Coffey enlisted Mary in the cause.

"Mary," he said, "you will have to make the mission every night for your father."

"Yes, Father, I'll make it for him," answered Mary.

Mary came faithfully night after night, but had to report to Father Coffey: "No change in papa."

"Too bad, Mary," said Father Coffey. "But we'll not give up."

Friday night came bringing a heavy rain during the services. Father Coffey saw his

chance. He got a big cloak and went into the church, found Mary and told her to come into the vestibule. When there:

"Here, Mary," he said, "put this cloak around you and we'll run over to the house a minute. I want you to telephone to papa to come and take you home. Tell him to bring a raincoat for you." Mary obeyed, wondering what it meant.

"Now, Mary," said Father Coffey, "you hurry back to the church. Papa will be waiting for you at the door of the church, but don't you come out that way. You go up past the altar and go down that way to the basement where the religious articles are. Stay there as long as you can, picking out a nice pair of beads for yourself. Don't come out till I tell you. Here's something to buy the beads with."

Mary was a bright girl and understood readily. The services closed and Mary made her way quickly down to the basement. Father Coffey stepped into the sacristy and there happened upon me.

"Father," he said, "I wish you wouldn't go into the confessional for a while to-night. I have a big fish I am catching to-night and you can help me. He'll be as good as fifty others.

Go down to the basement and I'll meet you there after a while and tell you more."

As much mystified as Mary was, I went down to the basement and waited. The purchasers of religious articles were leaving one by one and nothing happened. Meantime, Bill was waiting before the church door, wondering why Mary did not appear. He began to be anxious and to look in. Father Coffey spied him and going out to him said pleasantly:

"Good evening, Bill. How did you enjoy the sermon?"

"I wasn't at the sermon," said Bill, uneasily. "I'm waiting to bring Mary home. I wonder where she is."

"Oh, Mary!" said Father Coffey, in apparent surprise. "I just saw Mary downstairs. She is getting a pair of beads or something. You just go around the church, Bill, and wait for her at the side door below. She'll be out right away."

A moment after Father Coffey came on the jump into the basement and said to me:

"You'll find your man standing just outside the door over there. Get him any way you can. I'll let nobody out that way."

Then he saw Mary. "Don't you move yet, Mary," he warned.

I wandered over to the door, opened it as though to look out at the rain still pouring down and saw a man alongside of me under the arch of the doorway.

"Good evening," I said. "Big rain we're having."

We began a conversation which ended within five minutes with Bill making his confession standing there in the doorway, the rain splashing all around us. It was easy to reach Bill, too.

I think that in a sudden flash, Bill saw through the whole elaborate plan of Father Coffey and at that moment the grace of God made him see how he was pursued. The "Hound of Heaven" had touched him at last.

"Thank God!" said Father Coffey, when I told him all was well. "Now, Mary, you can go to your father—and God bless you!"

CHAPTER XIV

STRAWS

TO assemble such diverse forces and to gear them so accurately as to have them revolve together without friction, is in itself a notable work. But to keep them as they have begun is the final test of values. Putting a hand to the plow is easy. The difficult thing is to keep from looking back and then letting go. Beginnings may be hard, but the unbroken, relentless continuing at it is harder. The grind of eternal vigilance is wearing on soul and body, yet that is the price, not alone of liberty, but of everything great that man attempts.

This was a truth that Father Coffey reduced to practice in the upbuilding of his parish. He watched the gearing constantly and as soon as he noted the beginnings of trouble, he acted quickly. His watchfulness did not take the form of gossiping or of spying, however. He tabled nearly all tales and discouraged their bearers. If he considered a report, it was only

to sift it to the bottom. He did not credit paper statistics. His method was to go to the person involved and there he depended upon getting the truth. Generally he did, because he was trusted.

His action in any matter was carefully adjusted to the character he was meeting. He was quick, but never pounced upon anyone, never nagged nor stormed. His intuition was exceptional and his corrections were always flavored with humor.

One Sunday morning he was entering the church to say Mass, when his eye fell upon Sue Carbery, ordinarily a very staid and unpretentious, but to-day a highly decorated, person.

"Good morning," said Father Coffey. "My God, Sue, you have enough powder on your face this morning to make a batch of biscuits!"

"Father," replied Sue, not at all disconcerted, "I put on an extra supply. I'm going to be out for the day."

A widow made a second marriage. A week later the newly wedded wife called at the rectory to have the priest settle matrimonial difficulties.

"I am unable to account for the trouble," she said, "as I asked the guidance of St. Joseph in my choice."

"Poor St. Joseph!" said Father Coffey. "That's the way people treat him. They go in front of him and make pious faces at him. Then they get behind him and shove him around until they have him over in the corner they've already picked out for him, whether he likes it or not; and they put the words into his mouth. If you had let St. Joseph take a hand in this, all would be well; but he has the name without the gain."

During one of his sermons a baby became restless and began to cry. The crying grew in volume until it filled the church and it became plain that either Father Coffey or the baby would have to stop.

"There are two of us preaching in this church at once," said he, "and I don't know which of us is giving the better sermon. When a baby cries in church, he is telling us two things. First, that there are babies in the family; and second, that the mother has come to Mass with her baby. On the whole, I think the baby is preaching the better sermon and I'll let him go on with it. In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." And he continued the Mass.

A class of boys in the high school got a spell of coltishness and began some of their boys'

irresponsible plunging and galloping. Sister warned them to settle down, but the spring was in their blood and they had to go through with it. Finally Sister complained to Father Coffey, a thing she seldom did, and then told the boys they had better expect something as Father knew of their conduct. They settled down beautifully but they felt the worst had not yet arrived. A week passed and they were beginning to feel easy, when one morning Father Coffey appeared and proceeded to settle the matter.

He said no word but immediately started showering blows right and left on the backs of the offenders, with a short rubber hose he had taken from his pocket. They all knew what the punishment was for and their thoughts were not of surprise but of escape.

There was a large bookcase, with glass doors, on one side of the room and in a moment the quickwitted lads had ranged themselves with their backs to it, knowing that Father would be handicapped by this background. Then they threw up their hands. Father Coffey looked them over seriously and then spoke the only words that were said all through the performance.

"Good morning, Sister. Good morning, children," and walked out.

It is, perhaps, bromidic to say that all the dogs of the town were friends of Father Coffey. Every modern novel hero is "loved by dogs and children." Whether the dogs loved Father or not, we have to say that Father liked dogs. Seeing this, a gentleman of the town presented him with a huge Newfoundland. Father Coffey was very proud of the animal and used to take him out on exhibition walks through the streets. But he had to give him up.

"That wasn't a dog," he said. "It was a steam roller. I couldn't stand the expense. Every time he leaned against anything in the house, he broke it. After he began caving in the front porch I saw I'd have to take out a new insurance policy for cyclones. He'd make a fine house wrecker."

Soon after this, his friend Father Ryan presented him with another, a Boston bull dog, they called it. If the Bostonese knew about this, they tolerated a libel. He was the ugliest dog in the world, with a shape like Daniel Quilp's and a face that would have made a gargoyle jealous. When he arrived at the house and was uncrated, Father Coffey looked

at him sideways over the rim of his glasses and named him, "Pansy." He was loyal to Pansy, probably because of his friendship for Father Ryan. Whatever the reason, to any unfavorable comments made about Pansy's beauty, he would seriously reply:

"Pansy is a lovely dog. He's pedigreed. He belongs to a royal family."

Every morning thereafter, himself and Pansy could be found walking up and down the front yard for Pansy's exercise. The Sisters passed that way to Mass in the morning and if by chance the dog would run to the fence to greet them, he would be reminded by Father Coffey calling to him in a tone of professorial reprimand, "Here, Pansy, choose your company."

To live with Father Coffey in his home was to enjoy the ideal of priestly hospitality. A visitor there felt that surely enough he had come into harbor. Even outside the charm of his conversation, his "den" was a place to browse about in. He had a good sized library in which there was very little dead wood. Paintings and clever crayons done by the children in the school were among the most interesting of his pictures. Pottery was one of his minor hobbies and there were about twenty-

five pieces of the different wares set in odd corners. Just outside, on a small porch, he kept some hardy flowers.

"I can't keep looking out at that smoke," he said. "It becomes depressing. I fight it with flowers. The poor things have nothing to breathe but smoke, though. They're only carbon copies of flowers, but they cheer me up."

An hour of entertainment was always certain whenever Father Coffey gave one of his readings in palmistry. He had read somewhat on the subject, had acquired some of the phraseology, and it was no effort to him to assume the inspired manner of the professional palmist. This, of course, was his main reliance for the complete success of the delusion.

A casual visitor would easily be led to suppose him perfectly serious. He opened the session with an impressive talk on the reality of the hand's power of expression of character. Then in a casual way, he would exemplify by reading a hand of one of the company. The reading always started off with the magnificent qualities of the owner, portrayed so clearly in the lines that they startled Father Coffey into eloquence.

Just when the client was about ready to vault into the seventh heaven with the sudden

realization of the marvelous qualities he always knew he possessed, but which never were appreciated before, he was winged with the solemn and single word shot at him:

"But——" then would follow a series of reverse qualities picked right off the same hand. This completely negatived the earlier reading and ran the client with so headlong a descent down into the criminal class, that at the close of the reading he felt like a murderer. Never a smile out of Father Coffey, though the company was in pain with suppressed laughter. He *must* do his duty here. He must read just what he saw, and his manner and voice suggested that he was indeed an oracle. It was a scene worthy of the comedies of Shakespeare.

He never read the same hand twice in the same way, as the lines changed, he said, with the soul's condition. So that a hero one day would very likely be a villain the next, and be glad he had thus far escaped the gallows. I shall not forget the way he used to close many of the readings of uninitiated clients.

"The thumb," he would say. "Ah, the thumb—" this with an intense stage whisper as though the company must not hear it. "It's the thumb of a primitive hand—the thumb of a chimpanzee!"

His subjects of conversation took a wide range over people and things. He spoke of the absent with respect and no one could appreciate with more enthusiasm the good qualities of others. Often in the midst of an interesting discussion, he would be interrupted by a caller. He never delayed, but broke off immediately and went down to meet the person, greeting him cordially and taking up his business with no air of preoccupation. His grasp of a situation was rapid and thorough, his advice clear and decided, so that he attended to a great variety of matters with an unworried ease that was astonishing.

In addition to all this, he published every month the "Parish Messenger," a sixteen page booklet. The advertising, the proof reading and most of the copy were attended to by himself. A beautiful poem, or a striking religious thought in prose took up the front cover page, done in color. The articles followed closely the needs of the times. He wrote frequently on Socialism in all its aspects, realizing that his people needed a regular antidote against that particular form of irreligion. Neither was he afraid to say what he thought when political bigotry attacked the Church. He wrote on friendship often and the blessings of peace with

one another, of the home, of cheerfulness, of the advantages of the Catholic Faith.

Financial reports were made regularly in the Messenger and the personal chat always took the note of appreciation of the spirit and generosity of the people of St. Agnes' parish. There was thankfulness for all favors done and praise for all worthy work.

Father Coffey showed in this paper that he would have made a striking writer and a good editor. His style was himself. He talked with his pen. Directness, clearness and intensity made his articles interesting every line of them and worthy of the columns of any journal. Humor is not absent and the whole is permeated with religious conviction and a forceful piety.

If I could put down here the list of names in his financial report, nothing further would be needed to reveal the diversity of the nationalities he was molding into the best kind of citizens; for he was leavening them with the grace of God in the spirit of the Catholic Church.

CHAPTER XV

THE LITTLE ONES

"HE remains, too, a living force for good in the limpid innocence of the children he guarded with a father's care," says Father Powers, writing of Father Coffey's work with the young.

"No superintendent could take more interest in his school. He was an inspiration to teachers and pupils," are the words of one of the Sisters who taught in St. Agnes' School.

These two brief statements indicate the alpha and the omega of all Catholic school work. "Interest in the school" as the cause, must have the "limpid innocence of the children" as the effect; and nothing short of this result will satisfy the educational ideals of the Catholic Church. "Innocence in the children!" is her first and her most persistent demand; for she knows that without innocence there is no education. The most unconquerable ignorance is immorality.

It took no deep research to see that Father Coffey liked children. Written large on the surface of his activities was the predominating interest in the little ones of his parish. In his own nature, there was a boyishness that never waned; and, with the children, he could give it room for play. Besides, as he once said, it was the kind of company that made it easy for him to think of his prayers, "For of such is the kingdom of heaven."

For their part the children were completely at home with Father Coffey. They would walk right up and talk to him like little men and women; and, while they missed none of the humor and the fun of the talking, it was the serious side of them that appeared above the rest. Instinctively they caught the idea that back of the fun their pastor was reaching out to touch the best and noblest that was in them, because Father Coffey did not associate with the children for mere amusement, simply to pass away the time pleasantly.

Woven through the apparently aimless tangle of quip and jest and passing question, unobtrusive but distinctly felt, ran the unbroken threads of the greater things, the continuous though happy suggestions of the life of duty that lay before them. He met them upon their

own level but gently kept striving to raise them higher.

He did not, therefore, coddle the children at any time, but as occasion offered, told them the truth, sometimes not the immediately pleasant truth, with all the vivid directness that was his; and they looked at him with open eyes and took the truth understandingly and unflinchingly. They knew he loved them.

He avoided the other extreme as well, the sense of conscious maturity of years and superiority of wisdom. He did not regard the ofttimes tumultuous presence of children with a martyr's air of toleration of a necessary evil. Such an attitude was not, in his opinion, a sign either of maturity or of superiority. Icy aloofness had no part in his dealings with the young. He was not an advocate of the "Little-children-must-be-seen-and-not-heard" idea. In order to see them at all properly he thought they ought to be heard. "Out of the mouths of babes" he knew that perfect praise of God could come, and he gave his little friends every chance to reveal it.

Practically he brought these things to pass with an easy simplicity. His visits to the classroom were frequent but not lengthy. He did

not wish to interfere with the continuity of the teaching. His attitude while there was more that of a guest than of a superior. With a few questions and a word from the Sister he found out all he wished to know about conduct and studies and then he left.

He watched particularly those children who seemed to lack talent for the school studies. He talked with them, observed them at their play, and wherever they "let themselves out," as he put it. He believed that shyness often kept children from showing themselves at their best. He obtained results from this method. "A child who lacked ability for brain work," writes one of the teaching Sisters, "was found to possess other qualities. These were generally discovered in the ball game played in the alley."

When a teacher reported a child as being a hopeless case, it was taken over to the rectory and for some time Father Coffey gave the child special help and training. These instances led him to be a strong advocate for individual help for the backward pupil, and he was looking forward to the day when such help could be given in St. Agnes' School.

The children who succeeded were generously and tactfully praised. Father Coffey let them

know that he appreciated effort more than success.

"It is the trying that counts more than the high marks," he told them often. "I'd rather have done my best and be low in the class standing, than be first in the class and not have done my best."

He was not anxious for the children to try to be "first" in the class.

"It's a poor ideal," he said. "Later on, when you can't be first, you'll be tempted to think yourselves failures. And as soon as you think that, you *are* failures. I don't want anybody here to be a failure."

In order to bring pupils to appreciate things beautiful, he encouraged painting, drawing and music. He would go into the music rooms and listen attentively to the playing, often not an easy task for one who liked the best music, but he always ended with a word of commendation and good cheer.

He inspected the drawings and the paintings and selected the best of them "to be hung in his salon," which meant his dining room. There they would be seen framed and on exhibition for his friends, until the next selection would be made and a new exhibit started. Many of the pieces, too, were sent to friends in Brook-

lyn, which made the children feel that they were getting into the Louvre or the Sistine Chapel. All of which resulted in a great boom for painting and drawing. For children of their age, their work was excellent.

At the end of the year, among other prizes, were those for the arts. Father Coffey would appoint from the men of the town, a committee of three, who would solemnly adjudge the merits of the artists. He would hover in the background with an appearance of great detachment, but at critical moments dropping a remark that would steer the judges whenever their decision seemed to hang doubtful.

The reason for this shameful tampering with the ballot box was that the prizes were money prizes and wherever two pieces of work were about even in merit, Father Coffey wanted the money to go to the child that needed it the most. That child usually got the money.

His financial backing in this department came from Mr. Wisener, who had discovered the school through the artistic penmanship of one of the little girls. From a fifty cent gift for handwriting, he had risen gradually and, of course, expensively, to the art section of the school until one of Father Coffey's latest Messengers announced him as the donator of forty

dollars to be distributed for meritorious work in painting and drawing.

Father Coffey also watched attentively the development of individual characters. The restless age for boys begins strongly around fifteen. They feel the school desk a cage, the school hours a prison sentence, the school discipline a ball and chain riveted on them. They want to get out of there, away from there, to ramble at will over the earth. The wandering spirit possesses them and they must aviate.

They throw down the books, those indentures of their slavery, and if told to take them up again, they paw up the ground and pass into the sulky stage. They're going to leave school, that's all there's to it.

This is a problem in any school. When the Sisters met a case that they could not manage themselves, they sent the boy over to Father Coffey to have a last talk before jumping off the cliff. Father Coffey understood this phase of a boy's life and sympathized with it.

"I know how you feel, Billy," he would say. "You feel rotten."

"Rotten is the word, Father. I can't stand any more school. I want to go to work."

"But, Billy, you haven't got your education yet."

"I've got enough. Look at how big I am sittin' in those little seats!" says Billy, wild with mortification at the thought of it.

"I know that, son. But look at how little you'll be when you get out there swinging a big maul eight hours a day and shoving freight cars up and down the track. The worst of it is you'll stay little all of your life. You'll never get a good job. Nowadays they're looking for a fellow with a 'bean,' a boy who can do some thinking. You can't think if your head isn't trained, and what training have you got? Just about enough to drive a coal wagon! You don't want to drive a coal wagon for the next fifty years, do you, Billy?"

"No, Father," says Billy, half aghast at that prospect.

"Listen, son. I was just like you once. I wanted to get loose, to fly up in the air, to trot all over the ground; but I had some good friends. They held me down and I am thanking them every day of my life since. Now, I'm your good friend here. Let me hold you down for a while and I'll guarantee you'll never be sorry for doing what I told you. You'll do that, now, won't you, Billy?"

"Yes, Father, I'll do it."

"Come on, now, and we'll go down town and have some ice cream."

"I don't want any ice cream now, Father. I'll go back to class." Billy settled down to his books again, and, writes his teacher, "we heard no more of quitting from that quarter."

Occasionally, however, Father Coffey met defeat. This was when the culprit used Father's own tactics against him.

Five-year-old Harry began wondering why the afternoons in school seemed so long. After deep thought he struck for shorter hours by the simple plan of "bumming" from school. He took the afternoons of a week off visiting neighbors. His parents discovered him and were greatly alarmed at Harry's early start as a bushranger. After chastising him themselves, they asked Father Coffey to help them in Harry's reformation. Harry was called to the rectory. He sat in a little chair, looking with round, sad eyes at Father Coffey. The pastor spoke to him.

"Harry, I hear that you have been running away from school."

No word out of Harry.

"Don't you know that's naughty?"

Still an eloquent silence.

"And if you run around with nobody to help you, don't you know that some day a big rhododendron will come galloping down the street and grab you?"

A little shiver from Harry at the thought of the galloping rhododendron, but no other response.

"Well, Harry, I don't know what to do with you," said Father.

Harry got up from his chair, ran up to Father Coffey and threw his arms about Father's neck and kissed him.

"I was conquered," said he, telling the story afterward. "That ended the correction."

The children liked to give him presents and he took them for the pleasure they got from the giving. He carried about with him a little match box, a Christmas present from a poor boy, with as much appreciation of it as of a costly diamond.

Their group gift to him at Christmas time was always planned as a "surprise." One year he mentioned to the Sisters that if the children wanted to give him a camera at Christmas it would be welcome, but that he desired to select a particular kind.

"I'll be surprised," he said.

Naturally a camera was decided upon by the

children as the mysterious gift to Father Coffey. He ordered the camera himself, had it sent to the house and examined it. Then he sent it to the school.

The presentation was made. Father was delighted and very much surprised. On the moment he decided to take a snapshot of the whole school as they stood before him. He adjusted the camera and suddenly discovered that a part was missing.

"Frank," he said, forgetting that he had been "surprised," "go over to the house and get that missing part."

"Sister," asked the children, "how did a part of our camera get over in Father's house?" They were the ones surprised.

Every year, the children had their Christmas tree, trimmed by the young ladies of the parish to look like a little corner of Paradise, and hung with all kinds of glittering gifts. They had their school picnic, too, and there Father made the boys learn how to wait on the Sisters, reversing the schoolroom process.

We have touched upon his spiritual care of the children when speaking of the general parish devotion. The "limpid innocence" of those young souls testifies to the worth of his work there.

In addition to his care that they approach the Sacraments often, he impressed upon them the necessity of much prayer. The Sisters took the children to the church at eight o'clock to recite the rosary. Frequently he would call from his front porch as they were passing, "Sister, have them say the beads for my intention to-day."

Their school days over, he helped the boys to get positions, and followed them as they grew up. I remember inquiring about one of the boys in whom I was interested.

"He is working at —," he answered. "But they'll ruin him there from all I hear of the place. I'm getting him another position."

It is easy to conclude that in all his dealings with the Sisters as to the management of the school, there was an entire absence of friction. His admiration of the work of Sisters in general, and in particular of those of his own school, was unbounded and was often expressed. He did everything in his power to make their heavy work lighter and to rob teaching of its impending threat of monotony. It was his little kindnesses that did this, rather than any spectacular attempts at diversion. An incident that occurred on his first day in Mingo will indicate his spirit all through.

"Sister X, our music teacher," writes one of the Sisters, "had been wishing for an organ for the school, but so far there seemed to be no prospect of getting one. I think that it was during Father Coffey's first visit with us that Sister mentioned the fact. Father laughingly answered:

"Sister, I am shipping an organ with my furniture and if you can intercept it before it reaches my house, you may keep it."

"My good Sister, nothing daunted, took Father at his word and watched every load of furniture that came up the hill. She was about to give up, when to her joy, along comes the dray with the coveted organ. She stepped outside and ordered the driver to place the organ in the school.

" 'It was a plot,' said Father Coffey, 'but I'll enjoy the plot and I hope you'll enjoy the organ.' "

He loved music and he had surrendered the only musical instrument he possessed.

CHAPTER XVI

AN ADVENTURE IN OIL

OIL is a synonym for smoothness, but in these modern days it has made rough going for a sufficient number of our progressive countrymen who have gone out to seek it, if not with the high motives of a follower of the grail, at least, with the persistent hardihood of a voyager after the "Fountain of Youth."

One thing an oil boom will do for any section of country—it will convert that land into the ugliest territory under heaven. The land of oil certainly does not look like the land of milk and honey.

"Ah," the oil enthusiasts will breathe at you, "it may be homely, but it is rich. The hands may be the hands of Esau, but the voice is the voice of Jacob. And the sound of that voice is all we care about. It sings grand opera for us."

The oil boom struck Mingo, shortly after Father Coffey was appointed as pastor. The whole district still bears the marks of the dis-

ease. Hundreds of skeleton derricks, like hideous gibbets, stud the land at intervals all about the scene (in many cases still active) of feverish diggings and drillings.

It is easy to stand at a distance and express a cold detachment from oil wells. A difference comes with the inhalation of the oil atmosphere. Only those who have lived in a community blessed, or afflicted, with oil, can properly gauge the situation, feel the thrill or even outline the experiences. It would take the "movie" with its rapid succession of transformation, to convey the correct impressions to the uninitiated.

When the first test around Mingo resulted in a considerable show of oil, there was a mad scramble for leases. The Widow Jones, who owned a quarter of acre of weedy ground, discovered after signing a paper she could scarcely read, that her shack was now located on "The Golden Stream Oil and Gas Company" lease, with a flock of agents making a sortie on every "tenderfoot" that came near their web and inviting said tenderfoot after payment of a nominal sum, a mere nothing, to dip his barrels into the "golden stream" and to fill them with the food of millionaires.

Most of the leases were esteemed so valuable

that they were held on the basis of "sixteenths." That is to say, the stock was divided into sixteen parts and priced to cover the entire cost of lease, drilling and equipping.

Father Coffey used to tell of one man who had a very small property. With no means to finance drilling, he organized a stock company selling "sixteenth" shares at one hundred and seventy-five dollars.

A wild dash was made for the new spot. Investors tumbled over one another to pick up their fortune in oil. When this particular organizer came to take account of his properties, he discovered, Father Coffey said, that he had sold forty-two "sixteenths." Drilling had begun and now he stood facing the law and perhaps a prison sentence for fraud.

The only escape was prayer and he began to pray God that no oil would be struck on his land.

"Any time of the night," said Father Coffey, "you could come upon the old man wandering around that claim beseeching the Lord that if He had put oil under this lease, He would drain it off before the drill got through the caprock. He was the only one in the locality who prayed that he might not 'strike it rich.' "

And, as Father Coffey told it, he was the only one who obtained his petition.

Looking on at a scene like this and seeing everyone "squeezing the oil out of the ground right under his nose," Father Coffey began to think. He met men who, a few months back had hustled a pick and shovel, now lolling sartorially and senatorially in luxurious automobiles. He heard women whom he had seen hanging out the family wash and sweeping the front sidewalk, now languidly ordering their chauffeurs and moaning about their maids and their oriental rugs.

"Is there no balm in Gilead?" thought Father Coffey. His mind was not upon himself but upon his church. Everyone else was getting the oil. Why couldn't his parish have some. Then he would have the new church and the new school and everybody would live happily ever afterwards.

"The Lord filled the widow's cruse with oil," he said, "and we need oil in this parish just as much as she ever did. I'm going to pray for something to happen to us in oil."

Sure enough, something did happen. Friends who had organized a local company gave him a present of some stock. They "car-

ried him along for luck," they said. Then they started drilling their first well.

"Never in my life," said Father Coffey, "shall I forget the days of that baby well. The excitement was frightful, increasing as the drill went down. We would go out every day to see how the work went on. No reason for our being there, but we couldn't stay away. Talked oil all the time. If anyone had asked me how to spell any word at all, I'd have said, 'O-i-l.' And if eyes were drills, we'd have been down a thousand feet in a minute.

"Then we'd meet over to one side and discuss profoundly how we were to dispose of our profits. That new English Gothic church I was after became so real that I got to be surprised of mornings on looking out my window not to see it there on the hill. It seemed, in fact, that each one slept with a pad and a pencil beneath his pillow so that if he awoke in the night, dreaming of a new way to spend his fortune, he might write it down before another idea replaced it."

The day the well came in, found all the promoters gathered around the derrick looking on at the last preparations before the drill was sent into the pay sand.

"We stood there," said Father Coffey,

"trying to assume that look of stolid manly imperturbability, but inside we were shrieking with excitement."

The cap-rock was struck. The drill went into the pay sand. Just heavens! No oil!

"We took a last look at the corpse," concluded Father Coffey, "and left like a lot of pall bearers. I don't know how I got home. I think I walked home backwards."

Though no oil had been found and though disappointment was keen, yet what was strange to Father Coffey was the feeling of confidence which quickly reasserted itself in all except himself. They met again and talked much about the dead well. The quality of the sand was good and the quantity fair. They got into a pleasant glow over that sand which surely indicated oil nearby.

Father Coffey surveyed the group, now on their way to a second jump, owing to the splendid sand they got in the dead well. They poured so much sand around him that he finally interrupted them, saying:

"Gentlemen, I thought I was given stock in an oil company, but I find I have been swindled into accepting shares in a sand bank."

Other gifts of stock followed the first, always with the same result. Believing that his

luck might change, if he invested some money, he took a sixteenth in a well about to be drilled in West Virginia. A reputed authority on oil prospects offered him a "sixteenth" on what was said to be an excellent lease. Father Coffey took it. Not a drop of oil anywhere about, "though I assisted," said he, "in helping to make a pin cushion of that farm."

One day here when the third or fourth dry hole had "come in," the field man called a meeting of the stockholders. The log of the last well was read and as usual the manager produced a handful of fine sand.

"We did not hit oil, gentlemen," he said, "but we have the finest sand in the whole district. Put the glass on it and see for yourselves."

Father Coffey, impatient of this eternal sand, looked grimly at the few grains that had been poured into the palm of his hand and said:

"It has cost me more to see that sand than to see the whole of Europe."

One might imagine that such disastrous attempts to "get oil" would have discouraged him. Not so.

"It appears to me," he said, "that I am on the wrong side of this oil business. In every

company I am referred to as the 'party of the second part.' The party of the first part secures the lease, portions out the cost, signs the beautifully engraved certificates, and thoughtfully permits 'party of the second part' to bear the expenses. I shall become the 'party of the first part.'"

The idea was more quickly realized than he had expected. A man whom Father Coffey had befriended, wishing to show his gratitude, as he said, tried to get him to induce friends to invest in a new company. Father Coffey investigated and discovered that the fellow had no leases whatever in the county he claimed was largely his. During his investigation, however, the same leases were offered him and thus within a few short hours he had reached what seemed to him, from his past experiences, the summit of oil fame. He had become a "party of the first part."

The "party of the first part" had an agent lease up about one half of a big county. It didn't seem to matter much whether the geological survey showed the territory decidedly poor in oil bearing sands; or, that for the most part only small quantities of gas were discovered, barely sufficient to heat the farm house adjoining the well.

His utter disregard, too, of so primary a factor in oil as "sand" provoked endless amusement among his friends. He never could believe in the necessary connection of the two. So with a magnificent and ritual solemnity that only a Father Coffey could lend to such an occasion, he signed a contract for a well on one of his leases.

The driller employed had an outfit which might possibly do to drill a water well, but never under any circumstances could reach even a shallow pool of oil, had one been there. The driller knowing less about the "party of the first part" than Father Coffey did about him or his rig, insisted that the money for the drilling be deposited in a bank in the vicinity of the operations. Father Coffey agreed.

Accompanied by a friend, he went in to Cleveland, not far from the place, and not being acquainted with any of its banking institutions, wandered up and down, surveying with a critical eye the various banking houses. Finally, a massive pile with huge Corinthian columns, struck his eye.

"That's the bank for me!" he said. "It certainly *looks* strong."

Entering the bank, he was met by one of the officials to whom he explained his business,

with such impressiveness that a special trust officer was detailed to wait upon him, and he and his friend were conducted to a private booth.

"I am the president of an oil company," said Father Coffey with the suave and confidential condescension of a magnate, "and this is my manager. We have located new and wonderful oil bearing lands in this vicinity and we contemplate extensive operation. We shall astonish the country. Our intention is to make this bank our sole depository and I have come to-day to make a preliminary deposit, merely to insure the business."

The officer listened carefully, with increasingly deferential attention as the language of Father Coffey grew grandiloquent. At its close he was evidently expecting a first deposit of not less than twenty-five thousand dollars. In a most respectful tone the officer finally came to the point.

"And how much would you like to deposit with us?"

"Just this for to-day," said Father Coffey, "merely as a preliminary, you understand." And he laid on the table three hundred and fifty dollars.

"What!" exclaimed the official, in a tone of

poorly suppressed disgust. "I understood you to talk of oil wells. Perhaps I was mistaken. It must be a water well you are drilling."

"Water well!" said Father Coffey, with hauteur. "Do you think I am a President of a Water Peddlers' Association?"

The money was accepted but when the president and his manager left, nobody walked with them to the door.

"Did you see the way he looked at us when we gave him our money?" said Father Coffey to his manager when they reached the sidewalk. "You'd think we were two fakirs. When our wells begin to produce, we'll let him see that we'll bank elsewhere."

After a short interval, word came that the great day had arrived. The well was due. Early in the morning after his Mass, he lighted a lamp at each of the little shrines in the church and told the Sister sacristan to keep them burning all day. He sent word to the convent asking for special prayers during the day for "a very important business matter." Then with thrills of expectancy he left for the scene, dreaming on the way of the new English Gothic church.

Next morning himself and his manager stood at the well.

"And how is everything going, sir?" said Father Coffey to the driller, with the dignity that befitted the President of the Company.

"We're down three hundred and twelve feet," answered the driller. "And I'm sorry to report that the hole is flooded with water to within ten feet of the top."

"I'm not Rebecca at the well," said Father Coffey. "I came here for oil, not water."

"There's no oil yet," said the driller.

Father Coffey knew that whatever little oil had been discovered in that county lay at a depth of over fifteen hundred feet. In spite of this he consults his check book and finds he has funds enough to drill five feet more. He waves his hand.

"Go down five feet more," he orders, and walks away to survey his remaining leases. It was like sticking one's finger in the ocean to bring up the Spanish Armada.

But in spite of the thrills and the humor of it, Father Coffey felt that his adventure in oil was drawing to a close. "I see it plainly," he said. "The Lord never intended a priest to be rich."

He paid some few bills for things he never before knew had reference to the oil industry; ordered a gas stove for a family that had done

him kindnesses; bought a ticket for home, and purchased a pair of durable shoes, saying:

"I'll have to walk to my holdings after this and I'll need to be well shod to walk so far from home."

Arriving home that evening he passed the Sister sacristan on her way from church. She looked at him inquiringly, as though to read from his countenance the happy results of her care of the shrines that day, and of all the prayers said for his success.

With a stolid face he stalked by the Sister, but just as he passed, he said:

"Blow out those lights."

This was the last of the oil boom for Father Coffey. Gas was discovered on his leases and he got most of his investment out of it. The rest he refused to credit to the teachings of experience.

"Experience isn't a teacher," he said. "She's a murderer. She murdered my dreams of a beautiful English Gothic church."

His ideas of the possibilities in being an oil magnate also shrunk.

"Being 'party of the first part' is all right in theory," he remarked. "The trouble is that there are not enough people who belong to the 'party of the second part.' "

CHAPTER XVII

A SEA CHANGE

FATHER COFFEY had been ten years in Mingo and had not taken what one might call a real vacation. His people often told him he should go away for a good rest but he kept postponing it until he could feel that he had things as he wished them.

In the summer of 1914, he decided to go to Europe for a good visit, to view historic scenes, to study the immortal masterpieces of art, but above all things to see the Holy Father, Pius X, and to obtain his blessing for himself and the parish of St. Agnes.

For a time after he made the decision to go, he was in the happiest mood and in conversation he would often remark to his friends, "Just wait till I go to Europe." However, as the time approached for his departure, they noticed that his gayety lessened and he began to feel lonesome at leaving the parish.

"If my ticket were not bought," he now said,

"I should not go at all. I think I am getting 'cold feet'."

Before he left, an entertainment was arranged for him and the parish presented him with a purse as a token of their appreciation of his work among them. He strove to thank them, but he was so overcome with emotion that his voice failed. They had never seen him moved so. Indeed, the parting was equally felt on both sides.

Once he started his journey, however, he enjoyed it thoroughly, never forgetting by cards and messages to keep in touch with his parish and to have them share in his pleasure. On the boat he soon became known among the passengers and his affability and usual wit made the voyage a delight. The letters that came to his family after his death from passengers who had met him for the first time on this trip, reveal the lasting impression he had made upon them.

On the way over an incident occurred that serves to reveal Father Coffey in two characteristic phases of his character.

Among the passengers was a lady who was in a very sad state of depression. She had been bereft of a favorite nephew, who was to

her, she said, as a son. Her grief was piercing and so continuous and so much in evidence that it threatened to cast a shadow over the whole voyage. The passengers did all they could to cheer her, and to distract her mind from its mournful brooding. They failed completely. The more they tried, the more despairing she became until they were themselves infected with the gloom.

Father Coffey noted this unusual condition of melancholy and set himself to bring cheer and comfort to the wounded heart. He wished not only to relieve the suffering soul but to prevent the passengers from losing the pleasure of their trip.

Through a considerable part of two days he tried to suggest consoling thoughts, advising prayer and resignation. He made no visible progress. The lady still weltered in grief. The evening of the second day, one of the passengers spoke to him and said:

"Father, how goes the patient?"

"Worse, if anything," replied Father Coffey. "I am a dismal failure."

"And I think you will remain so," said the passenger. "Do you know when this nephew died?"

"No, sir, I do not," said Father Coffey.

"He died just seventeen years ago, Father," said the passenger.

That was enough for Father Coffey, as well as for the nephew. He went immediately to find the Lady of Tears.

"Madam," he said, "I am given to understand that this nephew of yours is dead seventeen years. Now I have two strong sailors hired on this boat and the next whimper from you on this voyage, at a signal from me, they are going to throw you overboard."

That was the end of the Clouded Lady. She was a professional sob artist seeking the spot light.

Father Coffey's route was the usual one followed by tourists, with Rome the end in view. When he arrived there, he found, to his great regret, that the Holy Father was in his last illness and had ceased to receive all visitors. Among the friends he made in Rome was the late Father Charles Macksey, the American Jesuit, a professor in the Gregorian University. He often spoke of Father Macksey with high regard.

The war now broke out and Father Coffey was compelled to shorten his vacation and to hurry home. He embarked at Naples for the

return. This was a voyage of a different character from the voyage out. The passengers were tense with nervousness. They were in the war zone, with the possibility of an attack at any moment from above, from below, from all quarters of the horizon. Every speck on the sea was the periscope of a submarine; every unusual noise an airplane; every whisp of cloud the smoke from a hostile battleship.

Father Coffey had plenty to do in removing their fears and steadying their nerves. The following reminiscence from the Reverend Dr. Edwin E. Rogers, Rector of the Presbyterian Church in Bowling Green, Ohio, will convey to us an idea of the poise of Father Coffey in time of danger, and at the same time of his quick thoughtfulness for others.

"I first met Father Coffey," writes Dr. Rogers, "on board ship the morning after we left Naples late the night before. During the days we were in Naples, seeking passage home, all sorts of rumors concerning the war were afloat, and every one was somewhat nervous. While looking at a queer appearing craft in the distance, I became conscious that some one was near, and looking up saw Father Coffey. We at once entered into conversation, and an acquaintance commenced which became more and

more intimate until we bade each other good-by, September 22nd, on the pier in New York."

"During our companionship, we talked freely upon all kinds of subjects. Sometimes we discussed our theological views; at other times the problems which confronted us in our parishes, and again our experiences in dealing with certain phases of irreligion. In these conversations there was an unusual frankness and cordiality, and never for a moment was manifest the slightest controversial spirit. As I recall our talks, he appears before me as a brother Christian with a great heart, which was warm towards all that was right.

"I especially recall the conversation of one morning. I had asked him whether in America, and in our day, he found his young people at all restless under the Confessional. During the somewhat lengthy conversation I learned much of the working of this institution of the Roman Catholic Church and saw more of its advantages than I had ever before seen.

"On another occasion we were discussing the drinking habits formed by some of our young men. He condemned the saloon, considering it as a source of great evil and an influence which led astray many a young man. He spoke of his endeavor to counteract this

influence and keep his young men sober. For some time when a young man appeared for Confirmation he required him to sign a pledge that he would not drink intoxicating liquors until he was twenty-one years old. The plan worked in quite a satisfactory manner.

"Father Coffey on many occasions manifested a ready wit. Only a few of his sayings at this time am I able to recall. One morning as we were walking the ship's deck, under an awning, we noticed that while it was raining, and the sea was rough, the crew was busily painting the smoke-stack. This was black with a red band, and now they were painting it a dull gray. Everyone was nervous, as no explanations were given for the change. A young lady met us and anxiously asked:

" 'What does that mean? Are there German boats near?'

"We were aboard an English steamer and did not care to meet German boats. Father Coffey made some general remark, then added something to this effect:

" 'The news this morning is more assuring. The wireless tells us that the entire Swiss navy has sailed from port, commissioned to devastate the valley of the Rhine. And another item is that some Irish battleships are sailing,

loaded with three thousand heavy-armed Irishmen, who are thoroughly aroused, and are bound for the German front, anxious to be in the fight. When the Prussians meet these fellows they will turn and flee for Berlin.'

"The lady appeared comforted, and hastened away to impart the inspiring news to other despondents. As we walked on, Father Coffey remarked:

" 'You know some one has to say something of this sort to keep these poor mortals from hysteria.' "

Meantime in Mingo, everyone from the little children to the oldest folk of the parish, was on tiptoe for the return of Father Coffey. He had kept them fully informed of all his movements.

It was planned that the day Father arrived in Mingo the children should go to the depot in a body to meet him. They were to march there in ranks, everything nice and orderly.

"Needless to say," writes the Sister who tells us this story, "there was very little done with the lessons that day. Just as they lined up ready to march, some one called:

" 'There's Father Coffey coming up the hill.' With that, the children gave one bound. Ranks were flung to the winds and all the

teachers could see were heels, as the children ran down the hill to extend their greeting in their own fashion. He had come on a train just ahead of the one we expected.

"The Sisters were waiting at the convent. The first signs of the advance were several boys pulling a little express wagon which contained Father's two suit cases. Then they knew he had arrived. A moment more and three hundred children, with Father in the midst of them, turned the corner at the foot of the hill.

"All the people were out to extend a warm welcome and as he passed by them he had to greet each of them from the center of the crowd of children. When Father stopped the children stopped, and when he crossed the street and came close enough for us to appreciate the situation, it was a sight to behold.

"Each child seemed to think he should have the privilege of being as near to Father as possible. A number of them were holding him by the hands. Others satisfied themselves by catching hold of his coat and trousers. It was laughable, as Father Coffey rarely found himself in a predicament where he was unable to help himself. But this time he was swamped.

"Walking was difficult and it is no wonder that his face was as rosy as an apple. By patiently picking his way step by step, he finally reached the convent and the first words the Sisters heard him say were:

" 'My God, this is worse than the war!'

"In order to free himself from the children he came up the convent steps, looked out at the children and at the people and thanked them for their kindness to him.

" 'To-morrow,' he said, 'we'll have a grand reunion and I'll tell you all about everything.'

"Then he said to the children, 'Children, I have been free for two months and I think you ought to have a day. You're free now for the rest of the day. Beat it right away.' "

Amid shrill and merry shouts, the children "beat it."

CHAPTER XVIII

TRADE TILL I COME

THERE is no man, perhaps, taking him as a class, who is more thoroughly unconscious of the good he does, than the parish priest. There is a supernatural reason for this—and a natural. For the priest believes that as a messenger of God's Gospel and a dispenser of God's grace through the Sacraments, he is merely an instrument in the Divine hands and, therefore, he rightly attributes all ultimate work to God. "I plant," he says with St. Paul, "Apollo waters, but God gives the increase." Always present to his mind, too, are the words of Christ—"Without Me, you can do nothing." These words hold for every human being, it is true, but the priest, like Paul, takes them to himself in a special manner as a particular warning against the possible temptation of attributing to himself any of the final results of his high ministry.

From a natural standpoint, also, there is a reason for his unconsciousness of doing great

good. The priest does not see his work. He does indeed build churches and schools; but should you make comment upon this, he will tell you that it is the Sisters who are doing the good, under God, in the school, and that God, too, is fashioning the souls in the church. As for the buildings themselves, they are simply the shells within which the work is done. "Anyone can build," he will say.

He moves about among his people, indeed, and cares for them day after day; but when the very last touch is given that the priest knows means the life of the soul, it is invisible to him and he knows that touch has not been his own. So he goes ahead with his steady routine, busied, as far as his immediate natural view carries him, with the little things. A line added here, a corner rounded off there, like Michael Angelo with his statue. Only, the priest sees not that line nor that rounded corner, nor can he step back at any time and contemplate with satisfaction the finished work. He may have a general sense that things go well in the parish, that Mr. Brown or Mrs. Black is doing better now than formerly, that Billy and Margaret are improving and give promise of growing into fine manhood or womanhood; but at best the vision is vague,

misted over with uncertainty to the natural sight, and clear only to the eye of faith.

The parish priest has not the natural advantage of knowing just how his work is going. He cannot tap the fruit to see its ripeness. He has no gauge to measure accurately the contents of a soul; no speedometer to register its actual forward movement. He plants, he waters, but the increase he must perforce leave with God.

The professor can quiz his class and ascertain just how each individual has seized his lectures; the speaker, by his visible sway over his hearers, the artist through his critics, the man of business from his cash box can estimate, each one, his location as accurately as the sailor finds his latitude and longitude. With the parish priest it is not so. He is so close to his work that he cannot see it in perspective and the key to its real progress is held in another world.

An observant outsider can value the parish priest's total work much better, even though he cannot see the multitude of infinitesimal touches that brought that total into being. As a missionary who has moved about for some years in this particular field of parishes, I consider myself exceptionally fortunate in having

been able to get at least a bird's-eye view of this wonderful work of the parish priest. The persistent leavening vitality of the Catholic Church, as witnessed in this medium, came to me as a revelation. I had the belief before this, of course, that such was the fact; but it was something almost in the abstract, a mere adumbration of the reality that rose before me with the vision of the actual work.

The contrast between a district that has its priest and one that has not, is as sharp as the difference between black and white. To return to a parish after some years and to note the steadily higher tides of grace flooding that little world of souls, forces one to cry out, "This is, indeed, the great work of the Catholic Church! This is the great answer to the apostolic call, 'Go forth and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost.' "

Yet if one were to ask any priest what he is doing, he would answer, "Planting, watering; 'things of the common hour.' "

Father Coffey was such a priest. We have looked closely enough upon his life to see a man of unwavering faith, of supreme unselfishness, of universal appeal, of resolute buoyancy and a penetrating intelligence, devoting the

best that was in him to an uninterrupted succession of little things. He had no desire for notoriety, for change, for prominent position. Because he felt that God had already put him in what He judged was the most prominent position possible in the world of men—close to human souls. He never showed the least yearning for anything else except this work of the Good Shepherd; and when we come to think of it, the noblest action of the good shepherd in the parable, was that little thing of going after the lost sheep.

We have not wished, therefore, to present Father Coffey as a man apart from the body of the priesthood. He was unique, it is true, and decidedly individual. But every man is this, though it may not always be caught at first glance. The essential work that Father Coffey did is the work of all priests, each one approaching it in his own fashion, each one differing in personal gifts and opportunities but all with a like devotion to the cause and a like capacity for sacrifice. For they are all modeled on the Great High Priest, Jesus Christ.

"Were I permitted to use but a single word in defining Father Coffey's character," says Father Powers in his *In Memoriam,* "I would

say that he was priestly, which means that should duty call him to face danger, he would not turn on his heel to save his life."

That is the sum of Father Coffey's life. It was his sole aim, his only ambition, to be like Christ, and it is the sole ambition of every good priest as well.

No matter where he was, or what doing, this sense of priestliness in Father Coffey was never missed by any who had dealings with him, whether they were Catholics or not. When his people lost him, they mourned for him as a dear friend but especially as their priest.

They were soon to lose him. Contrary to all appearances, Father Coffey's health had never been robust. We can recall how in his home letters from college, he used to mention his headaches. He never made a specialty of health talk, regarding it as a rather self-centered subject, and it played no part in his conversations with his friends. He suffered much more, however, than any one of them suspected. His stomach, too, gave him much trouble; though with his perennial sunniness of temper, he concealed all dangerous symptoms from those about him until the end.

The last letter I received from him was

written about a month before his death. Though the shadow was hanging over him then, there was apparently not a cloud in the sky.

He wrote it during Christmas week, just after his parish had presented him with an automobile, planned by them as a "surprise" gift, but which we can see from the letter, they failed to keep hidden from him.

The name "Billy" in the address is a reminiscence of the mission given in his parish three years before, which coincided with a revival given in Steubenville by Evangelist Sunday. Father Coffey playfully transferred the name to me. It was his fashion among his friends to re-baptize them with whimsical names, as a mark of his humorous affection.

THIBET, December 27, 1915.

My Dear Billy:

It is very late but I must get a Christmas letter to you, or be ashamed of myself for a long time. Your card, your letter and your book came. Thanks for all, the book especially. It is so fascinating and so practical that I shall read it to the upper grades in the school and then place it in the school library.

Well, that dinner at Father Kenny's. I

looked forward to the affair with much pleasure and was certain I'd be there; but the awful cold I contracted in September was at its worst about that time, and though I had hoped till the last that I might take a chance, yet the view of all that was to come on me at Christmas compelled me to give up the idea, and I was a boor the whole day and all the rest of the week because I did not get to Parnell's Pink Tea.

The —— upon whom I relied for a man at Christmas, failed me at the last moment. I suppose the fault was mine. I thought they knew I wanted a man, and, not hearing from me till too late, they supposed I had engaged someone else so I had to face the job alone, and, believe me, I was a sick boy.

I got through all right and after it had the pleasantest Christmas that ever arrived in my variegated career. I had Father Dooley and my cousin, Jim Coffey, now a newspaper man, for dinner and it was the most delightful party imaginable.

After dinner Dooley donated his Primitive Hand to Coffey, assumed yours, and I insisted on keeping my artistic manipulator in spite of every protest from the parties to the second part.

That séance lasted from two-thirty to three-thirty and at four I was called over to the school to be "surprised." The auto was there, a seven passenger Studebaker! So was a delegation of about a hundred, in the midst of a blinding snow storm. They came from Steubenville and Mingo and were composed of Jews, Gentiles, pagans, besides my parish of Slavs, Hungarians, and descendants of Brian Boru, who will always be found somewhere near the priest.

The gathering was genuinely cosmopolitan. Father Dooley made the speech of presentation. I made one in response and before the cigars were passed—the cigars were gifts to me from misguided friends—and whilst the enthusiasm was at its highest point, I appointed a committee to be augmented *ad indefinitum,* to supply me with gasoline and tires for one year. Rejoicing they fell for it. So the car is a free will gift for a whole year. Wasn't that clever for a poor simple thing like me? O Billy, would that I had your brass!

After that, away we went for a spin over the hills and into the beautiful valleys of this beautiful Ohio country. The snow had stopped and we had fine roads for the first trip, anyway.

Besides giving me the auto and supporting it for a year, Santa was most generous—so generous that I shall leave for Florida, on a free trip as soon as I can go after the feast of St. Agnes. That will freshen me up for my work wonderfully.

Joking aside, all I can say is, these people are too good to me. I would not change them for any people I know. I am perfectly contented in Mingo and if I leave Mingo, it will be for the grave.

This is all the news for you, Billy. The oil or gas well is still in the hands of St. Rita and the Little Flower. Next week *must* decide.

Come with me and Father Dooley and Coffey on an auto tour next summer. It will cost you nothing. Atlantic City, Long Beach, Massachusetts and Vermont is the outline at present. Come!

Adieu, dear Father.

Fraternally yours,
DANIEL ALBERT.

Father Coffey hardly ever used the automobile and never took the trip to Florida. In a few weeks he was destined to leave Mingo, as he said, "for the grave."

CHAPTER XIX

THE LAST ROAD

"THERE are some occurrences to which it is hard to become reconciled and against which our hearts continue to protest. Father Coffey's death is one of these. So kind, so gentle, so full of life and energy, it is hard to think of him as one who is no more among the living. Having always given pleasure to his friends and never pain, the thought that death was near him, never entered our mind. Master as he was of laughter, of cheerfulness and mirth, one could scarcely think of death while in his presence, much less associate it with his engaging personality.

"And still it is true that he is with us no longer. It is true that this genial, whole-souled priest of God, whom everyone knew and loved, is a memory, instead of a presence. But what a memory! A memory around which profusely cluster the endearing qualities of his richly-gifted soul. A memory bright

with sunshine and musical laughter and rich with deeds of kindness."

These words of Father Powers in his *In Memoriam* eloquently reveal to us the sorrow and the consternation and the sense of loss of every heart that knew Father Coffey, when they heard the news of his sudden death.

The end came more swiftly than these words which tell of it. There was no preliminary symptom, no immediate warning.

On February 4, 1916, Father Coffey was, as usual, about his parish, attending to all his work. In the afternoon of that day, Father Dooley, one of Father Coffey's most intimate friends, called from Steubenville for a short visit. At its close, Father Coffey accompanied him down the hill to the street car, chatting pleasantly all the way. At the post-office corner, they waited together for the car which presently came along. They said good-by, and Father Dooley moved into the street toward the car. As he was about to step aboard, he turned for a last greeting to his friend, who had been standing on the curb. He did not see Father Coffey. He looked again and then saw that Father Coffey had fallen to the sidewalk. Father Dooley hurried back and perceived at once that it was the end.

He tried to talk to Father Coffey but there was no answer. He gave the last absolution and said the prayers for the dying. In a moment Father Coffey died.

He had said his daily Mass that morning and perhaps, if the choice were given him, he would have chosen the manner of death that God had decreed for him to fall and die under the cross. He died among the people he loved most, with one of his best friends near him, with a priestly hand to bless him as he went. And his last action was the characteristic one of courteous hospitality.

The lines of the poet, Lionel Johnson, might have been written of Father Coffey:

> As one of us, he wrought
> Things of the common hour:
> Whence was the charmed soul brought,
> That gave each act such power;
> The natural beauty of a flower?
>
> Magnificence and grace,
> Excellent courtesy;
> A brightness on the face,
> Airs of high memory;
> Whence came all these to such as he?
>
> No man less proud than he,
> Nor cared for homage less;
> Only, he could not be

Far off from happiness;
Nature was bound to his success.

Weary, the cares, the jars,
The lets, of every day;
But the heavens filled with stars,
Chanced he upon the way:
And where he stayed, all joy would stay.

THE END

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